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Revelation of Unity, Unity of Revelation

Bahá'u'lláh's “*Most Sublime Vision*”¹

By
Wolfgang Klebel



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The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation.

O ye that dwell on earth! The distinguishing feature that marketh the preeminent character of this Supreme Revelation consisteth in that We have, on the one hand, blotted out from the pages of God's holy Book whatsoever hath been the cause of strife, of malice and mischief amongst the children of men, and have, on the other, laid down the essential prerequisites of concord, of understanding, of complete and enduring unity.

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

Preface

This paper is a study of the pivotal principle of “unity” in the Bahá’í belief system from a new perspective. It investigates the question: “What philosophical viewpoints are necessary for understanding the concepts of Unity and Oneness of the world, which are ubiquitous in the Bahá’í Writings?” Dr. Wolfgang Klebel illustrates a new philosophical development that began after the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh. This concept of the “integral whole” is used to present a new worldview at the heart of the New World Order of Bahá’u’lláh.

This paper was first presented at the 74th Session of the Irfán Colloquium that was held at Bosch Bahá’í School, Santa Cruz, California in May 2007. Subsequently it was divided into two interrelated articles under two different titles and published in *The Lights of Irfán*, Book Nine, 2008. Unfortunately, due to technical limitations, the texts of those two articles were not completely transferred to the print-ready copy of the book which resulted in the omission of the endnotes, illustrations and diagrams. All of these previously omitted materials are present in the text published in this booklet which will be a companion publication to Book Nine of *The Lights of Irfán*.

The primary aims of the ‘Irfán Colloquium and its publications are the promotion of the systematic study of the scriptures of the world's religions from the Bahá’í perspective as well as scholarly studies in the sacred writings, verities, and fundamental principles of the Bahá’í belief system. The Colloquium program and its publications also include

presentations of the interface between the Bahá'í Faith and current intellectual and religious trends in the world. 'Irfán Colloquia provide an opportunity for dialogue, networking and team-building amongst those engaged in Bahá'í studies. It is also a unique occasion for those outside the academic and scholarly community to attend these gatherings in order to meet and associate with researchers and scholars from many different countries and benefit from their presentations. 'Irfán is a Persian word referring to mystical, theological and spiritual knowledge.

'Irfán Colloquia are held annually in North America and Europe, in the English, German, and Persian languages. As of January 2008 eighty-six sessions of the 'Irfán Colloquia have so far been held. Selections of papers presented in English at the 'Irfán Colloquia are published in a series of volumes under the title *The Lights of 'Irfán*.

Iraj Ayman

January 2009

Introduction

While the concept of Unity in the Bahá'í Faith is central and well documented and expressed as Unity of God, of Religions and of Humanity, the phrase 'Revelation of Unity' cannot be found as such in the Writings. In fact, the idea of Unity is a prevalent topic of teaching and is described as one of the most important aspects of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Who calls *complete and enduring unity* the *distinguishing feature* (GWB 97) of His Revelation.²

Neither is the inverse statement 'Unity of Revelation' as such expressed in the Bahá'í Writings. Yet, how "Unity" is understood in this dispensation is of importance, as Bahá'u'lláh has stated in a prayer: "*I entreat Thee ... to open the eyes of Thy people that they may recognize in this Revelation the manifestation of Thy transcendent unity.*" (PM 307)

This paper investigates the question: What philosophical viewpoints are necessary to understand what Bahá'u'lláh calls "*Thy transcendent unity*" i.e., the concept of unity and oneness, which are ubiquitous in the Bahá'í Writings? The traditional understanding of the unity between the whole and its parts, as presented in philosophy, will be considered in the light of the Bahá'í Writings. The new vision of the 'Integral Whole' ("das integrale Ganze") will be used to better understand what the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh have revealed as the unity and oneness of the world. This new worldview is more than a political and social principle and needs to be considered as the heart of the *New World Order* (GWB 136)³ and of *The Most Sublime Vision* (ESW 54) of Bahá'u'lláh; therefore it is an ontological and

metaphysical principle. Furthermore, this understanding relates to the new findings of neuroscience and neurocardiology, which will be mentioned briefly, and quantum mechanics, which will be described as enchantment, emergence, entanglement and excellence of the human mind in a fundamentally holistic⁴ vision of the universe.

It can be said that this paper is written with the intention to assist in the correlation of the Bahá'í Faith with current thoughts, as expressed in philosophy and science, following the advice of the Universal House of Justice:

Newly enrolled professionals and other experts provide a great resource for the development of Bahá'í scholarship. It is hoped that, as they attain a deeper grasp of the Teachings and their significance, they will be able to assist Bahá'í communities in correlating the beliefs of the Faith with the current thoughts and problems of the world. (SCH 13)⁵

While it is quite obvious that to attempt such an endeavor today surpasses by far the capacity of any scholar, and while the understanding of the Bahá'í Revelation will be progressively increase during the next millennium, this paper is a simple beginning to first raise the question, and then to try finding a provisional answer. In other words, this paper seeks to find the answer which is available today, but which will need to be revised over time as our understanding of the Revelation is relative and progressive according to the beloved Guardian. About the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, he said: *"Its teachings revolve around the fundamental principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that*

Divine Revelation is progressive, not final.” (WOB 57)
In pointing towards a change in philosophical thinking that has developed after the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, it is hoped that this beginning will open the way to better and more erudite responses in the future.

The new life of the seeker is described by Bahá'u'lláh, when He said:

He will find himself endowed with a New Eye, a New Ear, a New Heart, and a New Mind. (KI 195) [emphasis added]

Therefore, this new understanding of “*Thy transcendent Unity*” requires in the seeker the endowment of a new eye, ear, heart and mind. It needs to be understood, right at the outset of this contribution to the ‘Irfán Colloquia, that this “*Most Sublime Vision*” of Bahá'u'lláh can only be appreciated when the seeker – and that hopefully includes all of us – is “*endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart and a new mind.*”

The question is: how can we approach this Vision of Bahá'u'lláh, which He himself described as being “*Most Sublime*”? The word sublime, used by the beloved Guardian in his translation, has in English the following meanings: inspiring, inspirational, uplifting, awe-inspiring, moving, transcendent, and magnificent – all of which are fitting description of the new Vision of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

“Awe-inspiring” and “magnificent” indicates the relation of this vision to Bahá, i.e., ‘Glory,’ which is a key concept in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Who’s name is translated as the “Glory of God” and it is part of the Most Holy Name of God, “*Alláh-u-Abhá,*”

translated as “God is the All-Glorious.”(KA 170)

“Inspirational,” “inspiring” and “moving” indicates the effect this Vision has on the seeker, the person who seeks to find God through Bahá’u’lláh. And the word “transcendent” indicates the total otherness and newness of this Vision. Bahá’u’lláh describes His Vision as ‘most’ sublime, announcing that this Vision has some likeness to these concepts, but is beyond all of the above mentioned attributes.

Describing the effect of this Vision, Bahá’u’lláh stated: “*Were the breezes of Revelation to seize thee, thou wouldst flee the world, and turn unto the Kingdom, and wouldst expend all thou possessest, that thou mayest draw nigh unto this sublime Vision.*” (ESW 56) This statement can well be compared to Christ’s parable about the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13:45-46): “*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*”

It further must be kept in mind that the Vision of Bahá’u’lláh is the cause of the seeker’s new ability to understand this very Vision. It moves, inspires, transcends and renews the seeker’s capacities. That means that the course of action moving towards understanding this Vision is a circular and continuing process: we have to accept the Vision, and then we will be more and more endowed with the capacity to understand this Vision with our increasingly renewed ear, eye, heart and mind. In a previous paper this writer has described this process under the concept of progressive theology.⁶

This process defies both deductive and inductive logic as we know it. Therefore, this process has to be

first developed in this paper in order to understand its subject matter. Another equally important pre-consideration of a move towards this Most Sublime Vision is the fact mentioned by Bahá'u'lláh that our life has to be more and more consonant with this Vision in order to be able to understand it.

Purge your hearts from love of the world, and your tongues from calumny, and your limbs from whatsoever may withhold you from drawing nigh unto God, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Say: By the world is meant that which turneth you aside from Him Who is the Dawning-Place of Revelation, and inclineth you unto that which is unprofitable unto you. Verily, the thing that deterreth you, in this day, from God is worldliness in its essence. Eschew it, and approach the Most Sublime Vision, this shining and resplendent Seat. (ESW 54)

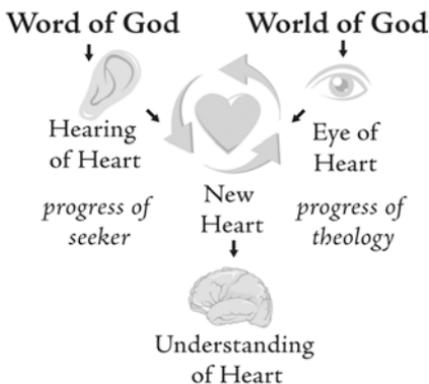
The same was expressed by Bahá'u'lláh when he admonishes philosophers and scientists:

For God doth not ask you of your sciences, but of your faith and of your conduct. Are ye greater in wisdom than the One Who brought you into being, Who fashioned the heavens and all that they contain, the earth and all that dwell upon it? Gracious God! True wisdom is His. All creation and its empire are His. He bestoweth His wisdom upon whomsoever He chooseth amongst men, and withholdeth it from whomsoever He desireth. (SLH 234)

Furthermore, we have to understand that this Vision can only be perceived by the “*unstopped ear of the inmost heart.*” (SLH 86)

It is not accidental; it is rather significant and surprising that this new life of the seeker is here described in an unmistakable progression. First is the new ear, which will allow us to hear the Word of God; then the new eye is mentioned, because God's Manifestation can be seen in the whole world and in our own life after we have perceived the Word of God. The next step in this process is the new heart, which is the place where this Vision can become part of the seeker. The last step is the new mind, a mind that will finally be able to get the picture of this Sublime Vision, so this vision can become a world vision, a view of the world, or, we could say, a new "Weltanschauung." The terms "*hearing of thine heart*" for the *New Ear* (GWB 217), "*eye of thine heart*" for the *New Eye* (KI 57), and "*understanding heart*" for the *New Mind* (GWB 35), are all expressions revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Seeker Approaching the Most Sublime Vision



The role of the heart in regards to this Vision is

crucial and will be mentioned in another paper. It is just in the last 30 years that the role of the heart in the neurological aspect of the body and mind is being researched and the findings are rather surprising. Even in a cursory view into this matter it is clear that the heart's function was not understood previously in the traditional medical neurology. When the human body is only seen as a mechanical system, the heart is just a pump. The long tradition to attribute to the heart so many more functions was totally ignored and never critically researched.

It needs to be stated right in the introduction that this paper attempts to see the world differently and in a new way. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has clearly stated that the Bahá'í Cause is a new beginning, and the newness encompasses everything that is to be discovered in the world. We have a *new age*, and we need to consider the *whole creation as being reborn*. For improved clarity, the following statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is broken down according to the topic described:

Now the new age is here and creation is reborn...

Arts and industries have been reborn, there are new discoveries in science, and there are new inventions...

And all this newness hath its source in the fresh outpourings of wondrous grace and favour from the Lord of the Kingdom...

... until the old ways, the old concepts, are gone and forgotten, this world of being will find no peace. (SWAB 253)⁷

What is most important about this statement, are these facts:

1. This new age will lead to new discoveries in science, industry and in inventions.
2. All this newness is caused by, and is an outpouring from, the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.
3. The peace of this world is dependent on a change of understanding of this new worldview and of forgetting the old understanding.

A new conceptualization of the physical world is also required by the discovery of quantum mechanics, as Einstein has said:

This discovery [i.e., the quantum theory] set science a new task: that of finding a new conceptual basis for all of physics.⁸

This new age starts in the heart of the believer and is a renewal of the spirit and of the understanding of this world, as Bahá'u'lláh described it in the beginning of His Mission in the Seven Valleys:

Nor shall the seeker reach his goal unless he sacrifice all things. That is, whatever he hath seen, and heard, and understood, all must he set at naught, that he may enter the realm of the spirit, which is the City of God. (SVFV 7)

This principle - that any change starts in the heart and from there will eventually renew the world - defines the structure of the New World Order as initiated by Bahá'u'lláh.

This paper is based on the vision that all that is new and valuable today, in science, art, technology and philosophy, is caused and originated by this Revelation. Consequently, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá clearly stated it, we have to forget the old ways and old concepts, i.e., we have to reconsider our whole way

of thinking and perceiving this world in order to bring this world to peace in the New World Order. While this paper attempts to follow this direction of the Master, it is obvious that this attempt is only a beginning, at best, in this pathway into a new age and new world.

Revelation of Unity of God, Religion, World

In this chapter an important question about unity is raised: Is it the same or something different that is understood by the word “unity” in the two different contexts of God and of the world, of the Creator and of the creation? Usually, when we talk about unity or oneness, we uncritically take for granted that we all understand what that means, and that there is only one meaning to these words.

Consider that in the English language the word “unity,” compared with “oneness,” has a slightly different flavor. Both words are derived from the English word “one” or from the Latin word “unus,” which both have the same original meaning in their respective languages.

The definition of these two words in Webster’s Dictionary is not the same. This fact is relevant to this paper and will be presented below.

ONENESS

1. The quality or state or fact of being one
 - a) Uniqueness, Singleness
 - b) Wholeness, Integrity
 - c) Harmony, Concord
 - d) Sameness, Identity (numerical), Unity, Union

e) Solitariness (archaic)

Unity, on the other hand, is defined more extensively:

UNITY

1. a) The quality or state of being one or consisting of one, Oneness, Singleness
2. a) A condition of concordant harmony
b) Continuity without deviation or change, absence of diversity
3. a) The quality or state of being made one, unification
b) A combination of ordering of parts
4. a) The quality or state of constituting a whole
b) The totality of related parts, a complex or systematic whole

(Other meanings are related to mathematics, art, drama, and to law, which we will not mention here.)

Obviously the definitions are overlapping, but the emphasis is different. Oneness is the more general and practical term, while unity is used in a more specific and technical sense, which is generally true for all duplicated words in the English language derived either from Anglo or Latin roots, for example liberty versus freedom. Additionally, Integration is only mentioned under oneness and Unification is mentioned only under unity. The relationship of the whole and the parts is only mentioned under Unity, and the meaning of this relationship is expressed under different subheadings. Furthermore, the word Unity (of Latin 'unus') has many more derivatives in the English

language such as, Union, Unit, Unite, Unitarian, and other combined words such as Unification, Uniformity, Universe, Univocal, Unison, Universal, and many more.

In general we will use these two terms interchangeably, but it is important to keep the differences in mind. In the English translation of the Writings the word Unity is more frequently used, for example in the *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, officially translated by Shoghi Effendi, the word Unity is used five times more often than the word Oneness. We have to ask if there are similar differences in the Persian or Arabic languages, or if the difference was made by the Guardian, translating the same words differently into English according to the context. It appears that there are more than two words in the original language; however Shoghi Effendi used the two English words, not in correspondence to the original text, but related to the context.⁹

Contrary to the Bahá'í Writings, Webster excludes diversity from unity, and uses a similar word only as an entry for "unity in variety" as an aesthetic principle related to the fusion of various elements into an organic whole, which definition comes closest to the Bahá'í use of the phrase "unity in diversity." There are two major reasons why we need to look at this word more closely. One is the social and political use of the concept of unity, which had vast and potentially devastating consequences as it was applied during history and especially during the last century. The different ways of understanding the word unity was propagated by different political movements in the past and is still used today. We have a spectrum of meanings, from uniformity and

identity of parts to aggregation of unrelated parts, i.e. from totalitarian dictatorship to extreme and almost anarchic individualism. Later, in the philosophical section, this will be explored more deeply.

The other reason why this word is the topic of this paper is the fact that the Bahá'í Writings distinguish clearly between the word unity as it is used in the created world and the same word when it is applied to the Creator. Without going into details here, we can already conclude that any application of the word unity to God is false if it implies any relationship to numbers, to multiplicity or any separation of parts, or even any understanding of unity in the way as unity is understood in our physical world.

We have to consider first the different use of the word unity, as applied to God, to the Manifestations and to the world of humanity, as well as to all the religions of God. The separation of the different meanings of the word unity, or oneness, in relation to God has been clearly stated by Bahá'u'lláh when He said in a prayer:

And if I attempt to describe Thee by glorifying the oneness of Thy Being, I soon realize that such a conception is but a notion which mine own fancy hath woven, and that Thou hast ever been immeasurably exalted above the vain imaginations which the hearts of men have devised. (PM 123)¹⁰

It follows from this verse that oneness or unity can be understood in different ways, depending if we talk about created oneness, or the Oneness of the Creator, of God. There are ways in which applying

the concept of unity or oneness to God is nothing but a vain imagination of the human heart and an attempt to make God an object of human thinking and understanding; in other words, trying to make the unknowable essence of God knowable, thus creating an idol rather than knowing God.

On the other hand, when the word unity is applied to the Manifestations of God, we can follow the words of Bahá'u'lláh:

Conceive accordingly the distinction, variation, and unity characteristic of the various Manifestations of holiness, that thou mayest comprehend the allusions made by the Creator of all names and attributes to the mysteries of distinction and unity, and discover the answer to thy question as to why that everlasting Beauty should have, at sundry times, called Himself by different names and titles.... (GWB 22)

When considering the Manifestations we can legitimately talk about distinction, variation and unity characteristics. Here we have a unity that is the unification of variation and of distinctions, a unity that is the sign of creation. As a matter of fact, Bahá'u'lláh expresses this in a prayer:

Thy unity is inscrutable, O my God, to all except them that have recognized Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy singleness and the Day-Spring of Thy oneness. (PM 57)

It could be said that the Manifestations in their historical plurality are the manifestation of God's unity. They alone give access to the inscrutable unity of God to those that have recognized them. Clearly it

is stated here that the unity of God is unknowable and can only be recognized in the unity of the Manifestations. The unity of God can only be praised when this unity is accepted, and when it is understood that all the Manifestations are one. This understanding is prefaced by the following words indicating the role “*of the spirit within the innermost chamber of thy heart*” in comprehending the Divine inscrutable unity:

O brother! kindle with the oil of wisdom the lamp of the spirit within the innermost chamber of thy heart, and guard it with the globe of understanding, that the breath of the infidel may extinguish not its flame nor dim its brightness. Thus have We illuminated the heavens of utterance with the splendours of the Sun of divine wisdom and understanding, that thy heart may find peace, that thou mayest be of those who, on the wings of certitude, have soared unto the heaven of the love of their Lord, the All-Merciful. (KI 61)

The unity of God is frequently expressed in the Bahá'í Writings but must be understood in this very specific sense. It is being manifested in the unity of the Manifestations of God. It is not an abstract or philosophical concept that can be manipulated and compared with what can be called created unity. Created unity is always a unity in diversity, or a unity consisting of parts that need to be unified. This unity brings with it forever the philosophical and scientific conundrum: how the relationship of the whole and the parts can be logically described, and how the physical reality of this world is composed. In the philosophical section of this paper this issue will be further developed.

The unity of the world of humanity and the unity of all religions is another principle of the Bahá'í Faith. It is, one could say, the most important, most actual and the most emphasized principle of the Faith, for it undoubtedly is what the world needs most today. Bahá'u'lláh has expressed this need by directing us to the situation of our time, when He said:

Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements. (TU 1.4)¹¹

It could here be developed how the understanding of the relationship between the whole and its parts affects not only the political and social structures of humanity, but the basic understanding of this world. One could say that the Christian theology in its Platonic or Neo-platonic interpretation emphasizes the unity and degrades the multiplicity of its parts. Consequently the spiritual is evaluated by devaluating the material.

This is the reason why the Aristotelian solution that gives the whole priority over the parts (form over matter), but considers both as equally real, was so well received in Christian theology since the time of Thomas Aquinas. This is actually a progress in the right direction from the Neo-Platonic understanding that only the whole is real, and everything partial is derived from it as an emanation, an overflow, and therefore less real. The opposite is happening in modern science and modern philosophy: the material, the parts, the aggregation of the elements of nature in causality are emphasized, and exclusively preferred, without consideration of the value of the whole, this way of thinking devaluates all spiritual aspects of life and deprives the world of

enchantment, of value and meaning. As will be pointed out below, this is changing since the findings of quantum mechanics are slowly influencing science.

It appears to this writer that the cosmology inherent in the Bahá'í Writings gives us a new and revolutionary way of seeing this relationship. Neither spirit nor matter is devaluated or negated. The unity of the world is deemed as equally valuable as the multiplicity and diversity of things material, and both are seen as elements of the Creation. A problem is only created if humanity finds one-sided attachment either to the spiritual, as in some forms of mysticism and in the attempts to reach God in His unity through meditation, or to the material, in the modern emphasis on physical reality in all materialistic and reductionistic systems of thinking. While this new way of thinking could be developed from the Bahá'í Writings in a thorough analysis of how they see the relationship between the one and the many, the spiritual and the material in all aspects of life, only some samples can be presented here.

The fact that Bahá'u'lláh states that prayer to God and service to mankind are equally valuable presupposes the fact that both the spiritual and the material are created by God and are basically good. Bahá'í spirituality, therefore, needs to be conceptualized on the idea of unity in diversity, and its practical development in the future cannot really be seen today. Shoghi Effendi's description of the future Bahá'í commonwealth is based on similar premises, as will be pointed out below.

What this unity of humanity is and how it should be achieved and protected in the future is a most

important question of which the beloved Guardian has said:

World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving.

... The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. (WOB 202)

Describing this unity of the human race and this world commonwealth, Shoghi Effendi depicts many of its features and lays down the principles of its organization. However, he states that the actual structure and the functioning of this world unity cannot be visualized at this point:

Who can visualize the realms which the human spirit, vitalized by the outpouring light of Bahá'u'lláh, shining in the plenitude of its glory, will discover? (WOB 205)

Unity of the Bahá'í Revelation

This is a principle of the Faith that is not stated as such in the Writings. It is, nevertheless a constituting principle without which the Faith cannot be conceived, and it further includes the unity of all Revelations of God throughout history, which is implied in the unity of religion, and is expressed in the Bahá'í principle of progressive

revelation.

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, clearly pointed out the unity of all the Writings when he made the following statement about the *Will and Testament* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* of Bahá'u'lláh:

A comparison of their contents with the rest of Bahá'í sacred Writings will similarly establish the conformity of whatever they contain with the spirit as well as the letter of the authenticated writings and sayings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (WOB 4)

This is an explicit statement about the unity of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and it is noted that this conformity is related to whatever the Writings contain, i.e., to all of the Writings, and it extends to the spirit as well as to the letter of the authenticated Writings of the Báb, of Bahá'u'lláh, and of His official interpreters, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

John S. Hatcher in his book about the "Art of Bahá'u'lláh" approached this Revelation with the tools of literary criticism. He has adapted these tools to study the context and style of the "Ocean of Bahá'u'lláh's Words", stating:

The more intimate we become with the art of Bahá'u'lláh, the more we come to appreciate this context of the Revelation as having continuity and integrity. And the more we come to discover this overall unity to the Revelation, the more we appreciate that no single work can be fully studied apart from this context any more than a single passage can be analyzed out of the

context of the work in which it appears.¹²

The concept of progressive revelation expands this continuity of all Manifestations of God throughout history, disregarding their need to bring the Message in accordance to the understanding of their audiences and in consideration of the fact that their words have not always been transmitted to us in their original form.

The unity of the Revelation of the Báb, and of Bahá'u'lláh is rather remarkable, but can be seen only after a meditative involvement in the Writings. It is not a superficial unity; it is an integral and pervasive unity. Even though it includes the obvious and literal meaning, as well as any deeper and spiritual meaning, it also encompasses the different styles of the Writings as Bahá'u'lláh has stated:

At one time We spoke in the language of the lawgiver; at another in that of the truth-seeker and the mystic, and yet Our supreme purpose and highest wish hath always been to disclose the glory and sublimity of this station. God, verily, is a sufficient witness. (ESW 14)

Below is a sample of the unity of the Writings that can certainly be improved upon and changed, but it can give us some understanding of how all the concepts and thoughts, the literal and the spiritual meanings of the texts, can be seen in a unified vision and meditated together.

The first column of the picture is from a prayer of Báb, and it includes the last four statements of this prayer.

The four Pathways of Love are from the Seven Valleys and do not need much explanation; these verses originally inspired this writer to compare them with the prayer

of the Báb, and this conformity was developed in an unpublished paper and in many presentations.¹³

The third column is from the introduction of the Seven Valleys of Bahá'u'lláh. Other explanatory verses of Bahá'u'lláh have been added in parentheses to place these terms in context. The verses directly under the underlined concept are the explanation given in the original text.

The next column is again from the Valley of Unity and is the topic of a paper by this writer, presented and published in the *Lights of 'Irfán*¹⁴ in 2005.

The final column is from a newly translated early Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh and again presents four concepts in harmony with the previous texts. Its importance is explained in the words following these four ideas, where it is said that they “*have come into being through the will of the Lord of all that has been and shall be.*”¹⁵

Revelation of Unity

TABERNACLE OF UNITY

IS THERE?	PATHWAYS OF LOVE	PRAISE OF CREATION	TRUE OF THYSELF	HAVE COME INTO BEING
Prayer of the Báb (SWB 217)	Bahá'u'lláh (SVFV 25)	Bahá'u'lláh (SVFV 2)	Bahá'u'lláh (SVFV 27)	Bahá'u'lláh (Tabernacle of Unity 5.1)
<u>Praise be God</u>	<u>Creature to True One</u>	<u>First Fire</u> <i>Lit from Lamp of Preexistence and Singleness ("The fire Thou hast kindled in me")</i>	<u>Inwardness</u> (Spiritual)	<u>Ascent</u> <i>Lightness, Heat</i> (To the Spirit)
<u>He is God</u>	<u>True One to True One</u>	<u>First Sun</u> <i>Risen in the Heaven of Eternity ("From this sun is generated, and unto it must return, the light which is shed over all thing.")</i>	<u>Firstness</u> (Individual)	<u>Motion</u> (Active, Form)
<u>All are His servants</u>	<u>True One to Creature</u>	<u>First Morn</u> <i>Glowed from the Horizon of Oneness ("Thou didst illumine my outer being with the morning light of Thy favor")</i>	<u>Outwardness</u> (Material)	<u>Descent</u> (From the Spirit)
<u>All abide by His bidding</u>	<u>Creature to Creature</u>	<u>First Sea</u> <i>Branched from the Ocean of Divine Essence ("The water with which Thou hast created me")</i>	<u>Lastness</u> (Collective)	<u>Stillness</u> <i>Weight, Density</i> (Passive, Matter) <i>Have come into being through the will of the Lord of all that has been and shall be.</i>

In the picture below, the Tabernacle of Unity is organized in a different way, following the organization suggested by the Seven Valleys and as described in the paper *True of Thyself* by this writer¹⁶. Some elements are omitted to make the picture less cluttered and the Bahá'í principles of Prayer, Service, Unity, and Order are added.



The organizing elements are what Bahá'u'lláh calls the four stages of man when He wrote:

And thus firstness and lastness, outwardness and inwardness are, in the sense referred to, true of thyself, that in these four states conferred upon thee thou shouldst comprehend the four divine states, and that the nightingale of thine heart on all the branches of the rosetree of existence, whether visible or concealed, should cry out: 'He is the first and the last, the

Seen and the Hidden....' (SVFV 27)

The harmony of the Writings is evident in this comparison. It is the *Most Sublime Vision* of Bahá'u'lláh. Its meaning becomes a proper subject of meditation and allows the believers to immerse themselves deeper into the Ocean of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

The unity of the Bahá'í Faith, in itself and in its Writings, is not the whole story; it is rather the primary and present day example illuminating the history of humanity. According to the principle of progressive revelation and the unity of the Manifestations, which are especially developed in Bahá'u'lláh's early and most significant book, the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, all Divine Manifestations throughout history and all of their Revelations constitute the Unity of God's Revelation throughout the history of humanity. Speaking about all of the Manifestations of God, Bahá'u'lláh says:

... thou mayest behold them all as the bearers of one Name, the exponents of one Cause, the manifestations of one Self, and the revealers of one Truth, and that thou mayest apprehend the mystic "return" of the Words of God as unfolded by these utterances. (KI 159)

They not only present the unity of God's Revelation throughout history, they all are the Revealers of one Truth, the Truth of God. This unity of all Manifestations and of the Truth of their Revelations was described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who indicated that this understanding is new and has not been mentioned before in any other Revelation:

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has announced that the

foundation of all the religions of God is one; that oneness is truth and truth is oneness which does not admit of plurality. This teaching is new and specialized to this Manifestation. (BWF 246)

That unity or oneness of truth belongs in the same vision as the unity of all Revelations is here expressed. Yet, according to some postmodern philosophers, there is no unity of truth, and truth is totally dependent on the subjective understanding of the individual expressing it, a concept totally alien to the Bahá'í Revelation.

Bahá'u'lláh clearly applied this truth to all Revelations and mentioned Jesus in this context saying:

...Jesus, the Spirit of God, [and] His proclamation of the unity of God and of the truth of His Message! (GWB 57)

This is a direct reference to the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John (18:37-38):

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

We can easily understand the doubtful answer of Pilate, and many post-modernists and modern bible critics would agree with him. While the philosophical question of “what is truth” will not be developed here, it is important to indicate that the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has a clear and expressed view of this issue and stands in the tradition of classical

philosophy and its claim that human reason has the ability to recognize truth.¹⁷

Unity of God in Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá'í Faith

In the following, a lengthy paragraph from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh will be presented because it brings the questions of what unity is and how it has to be understood in a new and surprising focus. We will first quote the whole section, and then discuss it sentence by sentence. Metaphysics and physics of consciousness can facilitate this understanding of the Bahá'í Revelation, if compared to the sacred Writings of the Faith.

He is a true believer in Divine unity who, far from confusing duality with oneness, refuseth to allow any notion of multiplicity to becloud his conception of the singleness of God, who will regard the Divine Being as One Who, by His very nature, transcendeth the limitations of numbers.

The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same.

By this is meant that whatever pertaineth to the former, all His acts and doings, whatever He ordaineth or forbiddeth, should be considered, in all their aspects, and under all circumstances, and without any reservation, as identical with the Will of God Himself.

This is the loftiest station to which a true believer in the unity of God can ever hope to attain. Blessed is the man that reacheth this station, and is of them that are steadfast in their belief. (GWB 165)

The first paragraph clearly distinguishes the Divine unity from all created unity. Created unity cannot be conceived other than as a unity in multiplicity, a unity that forms a whole from the unification of parts, which parts than can be numbered. Therefore, any concept of unity consisting of numbers of parts and elements that form the unit cannot be attributed to the Divine unity. This understanding of unity excludes the Christian concept of the Trinity, as it is usually understood as three-in-one or one essence in three persons.

Even the so-called atom, which means the fundamental part of all matter that cannot be further divided (a-tomos means indivisible, not being able to be divided), has been divided in modern physics, and the last of its parts that are studied have been found, at least in quantum physics, as not being a-toms either, or indivisibles, but are perceived as elements that are on the border between wave and matter, one could say between a spiritual or physical entity, as some interpreters of these studies claim.

In the next paragraph Bahá'u'lláh states something surprising and unexpected. Talking about the essence of belief in Divine unity, He makes a statement that can be easily misunderstood in the sense of the Christian Trinitarian theology, especially if the paragraph before and after this sentence is not understood, and some crucial words are overlooked.

The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth

in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same. (GWB 165)

Let's imagine that this sentence would have been presented in the Council of Nicaea, in 325, where the Trinity Theology was developed, and let's further replace the Manifestation of God with Jesus Christ, who certainly is a Manifestation in the Bahá'í understanding. So the sentence would look like this in this adapted and shortened form:

The essence of belief in Divine unity consists in regarding Him, Jesus Christ, and the Divine Essence as one and the same.

We deliberately left out the fact that Bahá'u'lláh describes the Divine essence as inaccessible and unknowable. Certainly, the followers of Athanasius would have agreed, one and the same is their catchword: "homo-ousios" (of the same substance or essence). The followers of Arius would have protested. "Not the same," they would have screamed, "only of similar substance, homoi-ousious." (I am aware that these two words were actually coined later as the battle cry of these two camps.)

The emperor, who according to Eusebius, entered the council in his golden splendor, would have agreed as well, even though he later followed the Arian interpretation. We must consider that the emperor got baptized only later on his death bed and that the bishops were probably dressed in simple garments, some of them still carrying the marks of previous persecutions. The council had been called by the emperor, and he allowed the bishops to travel at the

government expenses. The bishop of Rome, too old to travel, sent two priests as his representation to this council, which was mainly attended by bishops of the Eastern Roman Empire.

What we left out – the description of the essence of God as being inaccessible and unknowable – and the next sentence of Bahá'u'lláh, if it would have been presented in Nicaea, would probably not have been understood at all at that time. The bishops might have quoted John 6:60: “*Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*”

Bahá'u'lláh continued to say:

By this is meant that whatever pertaineth to the former, all His acts and doings, whatever He ordaineth or forbiddeth, should be considered, in all their aspects, and under all circumstances, and without any reservation, as identical with the Will of God Himself. (GWB 165)

What must be considered is the fact that this sentence does not limit the previous statement but puts it in the right perspective. The context of understanding of this statement is the fact that God is unknowable. So, any sameness or identity between a creature and God can only be in what is knowable and pertains to God, i.e., His Word, or His Will and Command, or, in other words, the Revelations of His Manifestations.

The distinction between unknowable and unknown is usually not taken very seriously. In the Acts (17:23) Paul is reported to talk about an unknown God:

For, as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE

UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

At the time of Paul, the idea of a god or gods was a well known and an accepted fact to people in general; only a specific god could have been unknown in Greece. Paul does not raise the question if God can be known; that was not a question that could have been asked at that time, because in the common sense everyone knew about the gods. It is a question of importance today, where atheism and agnosticism¹⁸ is widespread, and was the public policy in a third of the human population not long ago. It took several centuries to develop this question. At about the 6th century, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, following the Neo-Platonic tradition, developed the “via negativa” and affirmed the fact that we know nothing about God. Karen Armstrong calls this an attempt to combine the Semitic and the Greek conception of God.¹⁹

We may ask: what is unknowable today, where science and technology opened so many ways of knowing things? The only thing that is unknowable in this world is the “personal” and the “subjective” and even science cannot make it known objectively. The crucial issue is human consciousness, the fundament of human personality. We do not know what goes on in anybody’s mind, unless they talk to us. As a matter of fact, even neurobiological studies can only tell us that *there is something going on*, but not *what is going on*. Even our knowledge of our own mind is limited by our ability to reflect.

Psychology, with all its tests and clinical evaluations, has to recognize the fact that there is always a substantial part of the person which is unknowable.

That's why the therapeutic process is based on honesty and honest communication with each other, honesty with oneself and honesty of the patient, a virtue the patient has to learn in the process of therapy. That was clearly expressed by the psychoanalyst Loewald's description of therapy:

Our object, being what it is, is the other in ourselves and ourselves in the other. To discover truth about the patient is always discovering it with him and for him as well as for ourselves and about ourselves. And it is discovering truth between each other, as the truth of human beings is revealed in their interrelatedness.²⁰

This is the psychoanalytic description of what the dialogical-personal thinkers called personal versus substantial knowledge. Ferdinand Ebner has formulated this truth in the following way:

What exists as personality, can never and in no way be conceived as existing in the way of a substance. If we make the concept of substance the basis of the understanding of reality, then we lock out forever any way to recognize that, which exists in the way of personality. To a being of a personality we can only have a 'personal' relation, in the final analysis no other relation as the relation of the 'I' to the 'Thou.' To a substance we can in no way have a personal relation - therefore in our relation to it the 'I' disappears in a sense.²¹

Concluding, it can be stated that God is unknowable in any substantial, scientific and objective way. What we know about God is what He has revealed to us through His Manifestations, so it is an eminently

personal knowledge that is expressed in praise and prayer, not in any knowing of what God is. Therefore, the sameness between God and His Manifestation is not an essential one of “ousia” or substance, as the Council of Nicaea understood it, but a personal one. It is based on the Revelation of God’s Will or Word in His Commands, as Bahá’u’lláh so clearly describes this oneness as related to the acts of the Manifestations with the Will of God:

By this is meant that whatever pertaineth to the former, all His acts and doings, whatever He ordaineth or forbiddeth, should be considered, in all their aspects, and under all circumstances, and without any reservation, as identical with the Will of God Himself. (GWB 165)

The mistake, and at that time any other solution might have been even more wrong than the Nicæan Creed, was not in the identification of sameness between God and His Manifestation, but in placing the sameness into the substance, the hypostasis, or the “ousia”, or essence of God.

This is still true about Catholic Theology today. Karl Rahner, making a statement in his *Theological Dictionary*²² about the Hypostatic Union (as the explanation for the concept of the Trinity is traditionally called), said:

This formulation is the fruit of the great Christological controversies of the first four centuries. These arose of intellectual speculations which unsuccessfully attempted to elucidate the fact, evident in Scripture, that Jesus Christ is true man and true God.... (pp. 218-219)

It is remarkable that even Rahner calls it no less than an intellectual speculation and an unsuccessful attempt. From the point of view of the Bahá'í Revelation it has become clear that this speculation probably was unavoidable, but it could not be successful, because it attempted to understand intellectually what is unknowable and inaccessible, i.e., the essence or substance ('ousia') or nature of God.

That this intellectual speculation has to be unsuccessful, that the nature of God cannot be conceived or described, was stated by Bahá'u'lláh when He revealed in a prayer:

Every praise which any tongue or pen can recount, every imagination which any heart can devise, is debarred from the station which Thy most exalted Pen hath ordained, how much more must it fall short of the heights which Thou hast Thyself immensely exalted above the conception and the description of any creature. (PM 194)

Islam has totally rejected the concept of Trinity and accused Christians of believing in more than one God, accusing them of Tritheism, a heresy in Christian theology which never reached importance in theology, even though some practices of Christians today are not far away from this way of thinking. For example, there are medieval pictures, which depict God with three heads on one body. This way of depicting the Trinity was condemned by the church as clearly wrong,

What is rather interesting is the fact that in Islam the person of Muhammad, the Prophet, does not reach the same veneration than Christians give to Jesus.

This means that in the Muslim faith it is the Book that attracts the special attention; it is the Qur'an, which has come from heaven through the Prophet. In Christianity, the Book, the Bible, is secondary to Jesus; it tells us about Him, and that is its importance. The emphasis on the human station of Mohammad, the Prophet, can be understood as a reaction to the understanding of Christ's Divinity, as it is expressed in the concept of the Trinity.

In the Bahá'í Faith these two aspects are combined and corrected. Jesus and Muhammad are placed in the same position as all the other Manifestations of God, and the holy Books are equally seen as testimonies of the Revelation of God. It is the person of the Manifestation, as well as His Revelation and His Writings that are the testimony to the truth.

In the Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (p. 134), Bahá'u'lláh has combined these two traditions in calling the Manifestation the "Living Book," contrasted it with the written Book of His Revelation (the Báb, in His Writings, has used this concept of living book before):

Take heed lest ye be prevented by aught that hath been recorded in the Book from hearkening unto this, the Living Book. (KA 66)

Another verse of Bahá'u'lláh specifically explains how the testimony of the truth of this Revelation is established in the Person of the Manifestation, in His Revelation, and in the resulting Book of His Writings, and how this can be recognized by every soul:

Say: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to

this testimony is His Revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either the one or the other He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth. This is, verily, an evidence of His tender mercy unto men. He hath endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize the signs of God. (GWB 105-106)

The solution to this age old problem of the Oneness of God, that has caused discord and strife, war and hate between the followers of these two Revelations of God, is the fact explained in the above quoted verse of Bahá'u'lláh, that the essence, the substance, the nature or 'ousia' of God is unknowable and inaccessible. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has formulated this truth revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, when He said:

But, that Essence of Essences, that Invisible of Invisibles, is sanctified above all human speculation, and never to be overtaken by the mind of man. Never shall that immemorial Reality lodge within the compass of a contingent being. His is another realm, and of that realm no understanding can be won. No access can be gained thereto; all entry is forbidden there. The utmost one can say is that Its existence can be proved, but the conditions of Its existence are unknown. (SWAB 54)

Bahá'u'lláh describes this complicated issue by affirming that the Manifestation can say "I am God," just like the Christian believes that Jesus is God. Because all of what we know about God derives from the life and Revelation of His Manifestation, Christians and Muslims can say about their Prophet that He is a "Messenger of God," and Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that this is only possible when the human

aspect of the Prophet is seen in its “*uttermost state of servitude*”:

Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: ‘I am God!’ He verily speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His name and His attributes, are made manifest in the world. ...

And were any of them to voice the utterance: ‘I am the Messenger of God,’ He also speaketh the truth, the indubitable truth. ...

And were they to say: ‘We are the servants of God,’ this also is a manifest and indisputable fact. For they have been made manifest in the uttermost state of servitude, a servitude the like of which no man can possibly attain. (KI 178)

This is nothing more than an explication of the statement of Christ in the Gospel of John (10:30) “*I and my Father are one.*” And later (John 10:37-38): “*If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*”

To close this excursion into Christian dogma, it appears that at the time of early Christianity the concept of an unknowable God was unconceivable, since everyone was believed to know God. It was a time when the statues of many different gods covered the sanctuaries of the land, and the whole world was conceived as functioning in dependency to these gods. The Jewish belief in one God only, was

tolerated by the Romans as peculiar and as a historical tribal idiosyncrasy. On the other hand, the same belief was conceived so aberrant in non-Jews that Christians who shared that belief were called atheists by the Romans. To them, belief in only one God was nothing other than un-belief, a-theism. Christians were persecuted on the Emperor's mandate for such beliefs and put to death for it.

How could people raised in this environment conceive of an unknowable God, Who is only known through His Manifestation? So, they had to describe the relationship between Christ and God in their own way, inventing the concept of the Trinity and attributing the same essence, substance, or 'ousia', to both Christ and God the Father. This was a logical and possible unavoidable conclusion taken at the Council of Nicaea and then carried forth into 2,000 years of Christian Theology.

Today, after the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, we can understand that the mistake of their solution was the fact that it is totally incorrect and impossible to talk about essence, substance, nature or 'ousia' of God; God is absolutely unknowable in any such way.

Even today, even among the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, who came from a Christian background, it is quite likely that this issue is not clear, and our understanding of God is not yet what it should be in keeping with the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith. We have not consequently followed through with the idea that we do not know and cannot know God in any substantial and objective way, that we cannot even talk about God in this way, or talk about the essence, the substance or 'ousia' of God.

On the other hand, we are exhorted, invited and even

obligated to know God and love Him, not in a scientific and objective way, but in a personal approach. God has spoken through the Word of the Manifestations to us, and has allowed us to speak back and praise Him through prayer and service

The following Verse from a prayer of Bahá'u'lláh can best be understood in the same way:

*Here am I with my body between Thy hands,
and my spirit before Thy face. (PM 243)*

As in Genesis 2:7:

*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of
the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the
breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

God *formed* the body of Adam, so Bahá'u'lláh talks about the material body between God's forming hands. The living soul was given to Adam through the breath of God, which breath comes from the face in the picturesque language of the first book of the bible, hence the many allusions to the face or countenance of God as a indication of the spiritual aspect of man. Here clearly the difference between the material and the spiritual of man is described. Without exaggeration we can say that the consequences of this understanding will certainly change the whole structure and meaning of religion in the future

Concluding the previous two chapters the following can be stated: The difference in the concept of unity between the Creator and the creation is important and has to be understood in the way this unity is manifested in the Prophets of God. It is not their nature or essence; it is their Word, their Revelation, and their Message which manifests the unity of God.

That means that the unity of God can only be seen in the unity of the Manifestations with each other and in the unity of their individual Revelations, which is the Word of God and originates in the Will of God. Any other understanding of the unity of God is vain imagination, as Bahá'u'lláh stated in the prayer mentioned before.

Consequently, the unknowability of God could be described in this way: The essence of God is unknowable, so all that can be known about God is what He makes known of Himself. What God makes known to humankind is called Revelation, and it is known to humanity through God's Messengers, through His Manifestations, or biblically through His Word, which was incarnated in Christ.

In other words, nothing can be known about God except what was revealed through His Manifestations. Secondly, God reveals Himself in His creation, which is the place where God makes Himself known through His Manifestations in another form, as all that was created was created through His Manifestation, through His word, as it is said in John 1:1-3: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."*

There are three ways of knowing God: through the life of the Manifestation, through the Revelation of the Manifestation, and through the world as being created by the Manifestation. It needs to be remembered that humanity is part of creation, and therefore the knowledge of God is innate to humans as well.

These three ways of knowing God are described by Bahá'u'lláh, all knowledge of God comes

1. through the Manifestation, through His life, described as the “*Living Book*”:

Say: God, the True One, is My witness that neither the Scriptures of the world, nor all the books and writings in existence, shall, in this Day, avail you aught without this, the Living Book, Who proclaimeth in the midmost heart of creation: ‘Verily, there is none other God but Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.’ (KA 81)

2. and through Their Revelation, Their written Book:

The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation. (TB 156)

3. and all knowledge of God is evident in His creation, because *all things* were made by the Manifestation:

From that which hath been said it becometh evident that all things, in their inmost reality, testify to the revelation of the names and attributes of God within them. Each according to its capacity, indicateth, and is expressive of, the knowledge of God. So potent and universal is this revelation, that it hath encompassed all things visible and invisible. (GWB 178)

Overview of a Philosophy of Integral Unity

In a very cursory form we will present the history of the unity concept in philosophy by mentioning the

major philosophers and indicating their understanding. Certainly, this topic could be the subject of an extensive monograph, but here only a very short overview of the most important authors will be presented, assuming that the details are known.

B. R. Kadem²³ has described the “Origin of the Bahá’í Concept of Unity and Causality, A Brief Survey of Greek, Neo-Platonic, and Islamic Underpinnings” and has pointed out the distinctive features of the Bahá’í account. One of the most important differences is the assertion that the unity concept is attributed to the Manifestation of God, not to God Himself as in the Neo-Platonic and Islamic tradition. Therefore he states that

The Bahá’í concept of the unity of being is laden with implications unprecedented in the Greek, Neo-Platonic, or Islamic forbears. The understanding of these implications are therefore now part of the current and future labors of thought for Bahá’í thinkers. (p. 115)

He further states that there is a need to re-think the Neo-Platonic concept of emanation, when used in the Bahá’í context. In this paper the concept of Revelation of Unity is carried further into the present scientific and philosophical thinking, and only the following very brief reference is made to the historical aspect of this question.

Pre-Socratic Philosophers: Monism versus Pluralism

Parmenides (and in similar way much later Spinoza, and in some ways Hegel): One Reality, Monism. His understanding pervades all of European philosophy, from Plato to the Neo-

Platonists, and into the Christian Philosophy by Origin and others, especially in the tractate of the Trinity by Augustine. It further implies an emphasis on unity (spirituality) and distrust for plurality (materiality)

Democritus (and in similar ways modern science): Atomism. The whole is the sum of its parts, a mechanical, accidental and material universe. Any concept derived from the whole and not the parts is without value and can be neglected; all phenomena can be reduced to their “atoms,” and truth can only be found in this reductionistic way of thinking.

Classical Greek Philosophy

Plato: The reality is in the idea; any multiplicity is only a shadow of reality. Neo-Platonism has developed this further and was critical in influencing Christian theology towards the depreciation of the reality of this world

Aristotle: Unity (or Form) and Plurality (Primal matter). Reality is the unity of form and matter that explains movement and change; Aristotle developed his meta-physic after studies in physics (nature). This understanding was renewed by Thomas Aquinas and became the centerpiece of scholastic philosophy. It is taught in Catholic Universities even today, making Christian philosophy more realistic and directed towards the reality of this world. As a matter of fact, this more realistic understanding was one of the causes of the development of modern sciences.

Modern Philosophy: Idealism versus Materialism

Hegel: Idealism, Unity of Ideals, of the Spiritual, Dialectical process of these ideas verified in the social arena of the ideal Prussian State

Marx:²⁴ Materialism, Economic evolution of World Unity to be brought about by violent revolution, and cumulating in the dictatorship of the proletariat, even though it is predicted to happen with iron necessity. (Before and after Marx, Feuerbach, Darwin and Freud can be counted in the same group.)

The different ways unity and multiplicity were understood is a theme with many variations throughout the history of philosophy. It seems to have come to a harmonious solution only recently, after the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and not without the influence of this Revelation, as was noted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the above mentioned quote:

And all this newness hath its source in the fresh outpourings of wondrous grace and favour from the Lord of the Kingdom. (SWAB 253)

What is the newness in the philosophy of today that relates to the one and the many, to unity and diversity? In a previous paper of this writer, the history of this vision of the "Integral opposition of Unity and Plurality" ("Der integrale Gegensatz von Einheit und Vielheit") was briefly described, and the relevant authors were mentioned.²⁵ Here the thoughts of Augustinus Karl Wucherer-Huldenfeld, as described before, will be more extensively presented as they are important to better understand the concept of unity in the Bahá'í Writings.

The Integral Whole is described by Wucherer-

Huldenfeld²⁶ in the following points:

1. The Whole relates to the parts integrating or complementing them in a structure of a real synthesis
2. The parts, in their internal unity and diversity, are equally original and essential, constituting equally the respective whole, which they build with each other and for each other
3. The greatest unity of the whole is realized with the greatest independence and freedom of its diverse parts or elements
4. In the whole the parts are “healed” and integrated; through the parts the whole is “healed,” i.e., it is made whole
5. A dialectic of different conceptions of Unity & Plurality can be developed: Totalitarian dissolution of Plurality versus Radical Plurality (Postmodern Pluralism)
6. From an article²⁷ on Teilhard de Chardin: Unification differentiates; the more unity the more complexity is possible; unity of spirit and matter: Spirit-Matter

When considering the Bahá'í principle of Unity in Diversity, it is helpful to reflect on this new understanding of unity as an Integral Whole and the relationship between the parts and the whole as described above. In other words, this new understanding of the Integral Whole can be used and applied to the Bahá'í principle of Unity in Diversity.

Wherever such a new philosophical understanding can appropriately be applied to Bahá'í principles and concepts, the following happens. The philosophical

principle will be improved, refined and placed into a new light. On the other hand, the understanding of the Bahá'í concepts is often improved as well, as they always need a new perspective to be better understood.

As long as this new understanding is germane to the whole of the Bahá'í Revelation, we can speak of a hermeneutic circle of understanding, i.e., the parts of a revelation are understood correctly only in relation to the whole of the revelation and the whole of it can only be comprehended if we understand its parts correctly. This circular process of understanding is necessary in any progressively developing understanding and can aptly be described as progressive theology, a concept this author has used in most of his publications. In the following section this idea will be applied.

Bahá'í Unity in Diversity

The drastic change and the newness of this thought are not obvious, unless we consider the social and political application of it. That is really the topic of Shoghi Effendi's considerations about the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, even though it is not expressed in philosophical statements in his writings. The Guardian does clearly state that all previous social and political forms of political unity are obsolete and that a new form will be developed in the Bahá'í Commonwealth:

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and

permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. (WOB 203)

In this brief formulation, which is more extensively described in the Guardian's communication to the American Bahá'ís, it is remarkable that the unity of all nations, races and creeds is combined with a complete safeguard of the autonomy of the individual states as well as with the promotion of the personal freedom and initiative of all individuals.

What is crucial in the Guardian's understanding of unity in diversity is the fact that in this understanding the parts reach their advantage from the whole and the whole has to guarantee the welfare of the parts.

The advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are ignored or neglected. (WOB 198)

Seen from the side of the parts Shoghi Effendi states that any distress to the parts affects the whole; they are mutually dependent, that is, they constitute each other mutually. Neither is prior, neither is more or less than the other.

The welfare of the part means the welfare of the whole, and the distress of the part brings distress to the whole. (PDC 122)

Philosophically this conception is only possible in the above proposed understanding of the unity of the integral whole. It is remarkable to note that this

philosophical thought was only fully developed after the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, even though it happened in a tradition that prepared for this development.

There are many statements in the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith that envision a similar unity, where the parts are equally protected, cherished and found to be essential to the unity, especially the many comparisons of 'Abdu'l-Bahá of the unity of the world and mankind with a flower garden. Here some examples how the diversity and variety of a garden adorns its beauty and increases its perfection.

How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and eighteenth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest.
(SWA 291-292)

The importance of variety in oneness is emphasized in this sample from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings:

When there is variety in the world of oneness, they will appear and be displayed in the most perfect glory, beauty, exaltation and perfection. (TH 14)²⁸

'Abdu'l-Bahá's beauty in the diversity of the garden expresses the new understanding of the relationship between the one and the many, the whole and the

parts. It is described as a gift of God and the felicity of the human world in another statement:

Therefore, the part is expressive of the whole, for this seed was a part of the tree, but therein potentially was the whole tree.

So each one of us may become expressive or representative of all the bounties of life to mankind.

This is the unity of the world of humanity. This is the bestowal of God. This is the felicity of the human world, and this is the manifestation of the divine favor. (PUP 16)

The importance of what Shoghi Effendi called the “watchword” of the Bahá’í Faith, “Unity in Diversity,” can hardly be overestimated. Is it not the basis of any future political, sociological and philosophical development which the Bahá’í Writings predict, and is it not the need of our age? This is expressed by Bahá’u’lláh in these words:

Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.²⁹

In the Bahá’í Faith the spiritual is not evaluated by devaluating the material; both are valued and equal in their own right. Neither is unity extolled at the cost of diversity and multiplicity. That means that any devaluation of any aspect of God’s creation is wrong and alien to this Faith.

A basic difference to previous dispensations, like Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and others, is the value given to the world as God’s creation. This value judgment is not placed on the ontological structure of the world, but on the choices humans

make in dealing with the creation. Any overestimation of one aspect over the other is wrong. When the material, the multiple, and the diverse is overestimated, we have materialism and a station of man that is lower than the animal. On the other hand unity - or the spiritual - should not be overestimated either to the detriment of the diversity and the material. Bahá'u'lláh made this clear in the rejection of asceticism and monasticism and of certain forms of mysticism.

Bahá'í Unity is understood as *unity and diversity, as variation and oneness*, as oneness in multiplicity, which is characteristic for this created world, and neither can be evaluated by devaluating the other, neither can be affirmed by negating the other, yet both are transcended by the *inner meaning of the Word of God*, as it is stated by Bahá'u'lláh:

Please God, that we avoid the land of denial, and advance into the ocean of acceptance, so that we may perceive, with an eye purged from all conflicting elements, the worlds of unity and diversity, of variation and oneness, of limitation and detachment, and wing our flight unto the highest and innermost sanctuary of the inner meaning of the Word of God. (KI 160)

Bahá'í spirituality, therefore, needs to be conceptualized on the idea of unity in diversity, and the consequences of this new approach cannot be fully understood today, neither can the practical applications in the future be seen in our present world. Shoghi Effendi's description of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is the most that can be said today about this future development. And yet, it can easily be understood that this new vision will bring a

revolutionary change to all religions in the future, affecting theology, philosophy and the practical life of all the followers of the world religions. Summarizing we can make the following conclusions.

1. God's Unity is transcendent, beyond unity and multiplicity, transcending numbers and comprehension, i.e., unknowable.
2. God's Unity is revealed only through the Unity of the Manifestations, their words and laws, expressing God's Primal Will and Word
3. Created unity is always "unity in diversity", "oneness in multiplicity"
4. Created unity is constituted by the integration of the whole and the parts, which are equal and both original; they are the "*same and different.*" (TB 140)³⁰
5. The concept of integral unity, or unity in diversity, has implications for the future, and its practical application in the future Bahá'í commonwealth was described by Shoghi Effendi as far as this is possible today.

That this concept is not only a speculative or philosophical idea is demonstrated below, where the new findings of quantum mechanics, of modern physical science, are introduced into this theological consideration. This will demonstrate that even in the field of positive science this new thinking is necessary to understand the findings of research and experimentation.

It is a new, an enchanted, entangled and excellent universe that emerges today in this scientific view. A new universe, which is not only supplanting the previous mechanistic and reductionistic universe of Newton, but is also much more in correspondence

with the “*Most Sublime Vision*” of Bahá'u'lláh, which was enounced a century before these findings became available.

The Emerging Universe

The message of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is that the universe is God's creation and every created thing in this world is leading to God.

Every created thing in the whole universe is but a door leading into His knowledge, a sign of His sovereignty, a revelation of His names, a symbol of His majesty, a token of His power, a means of admittance into His straight Path....

(GWB 160)

This paper is exploring how science, studying the universe, is little by little discovering this vision of Bahá'u'lláh. This development of science is in its beginning and certainly not unchallenged, nevertheless, this trend ought to be followed up by those who have a knowledge of the *Most Sublime Vision* of Bahá'u'lláh. Every scholarly engaged Bahá'í can recognize what is said about the pervasiveness and generality of this vision.

So pervasive and general is this revelation that nothing whatsoever in the whole universe can be discovered that doth not reflect His splendor. (GWB 184)

First some new discoveries in Neuroscience and Neurocardiology will be presented and following that the interpretations of Quantum Mechanics, as presented today in numerous books will be sorted out from this perspective. The emergence of a new

understanding of the universe is becoming a popular topic and the horizon of this development cannot be defined as of yet.

That means that we can ask questions today in order to understand what the new view of the world means to Bahá'í theology, but we must be ready to revise them over time, as the scientific knowledge and the understanding of the Revelation is constantly evolving in a progressive process. We can only see what is available today and have to develop our understanding in a progressive evolution, which will abolish some ideas, will change others, and will find new answers to the question of the harmony between religion and science in the future. If this approach is used in keeping the Covenant of the Faith, it will not endanger, but enhance our understanding of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

The following two sections are rather brief and provisionally, yet they are inserted here to demonstrate that many aspects of modern science correspond and sometimes support concepts and thoughts presented in the Bahá'í Scriptures. That does not necessarily mean that these findings prove anything about the Bahá'í Cause, but it makes the message of Bahá'u'lláh less open to attacks from science, as the Christian message was attacked by a materialistic and mechanistic scientific world view. The Christian message, as presented in the different churches, was at the time in clear opposition to scientific progress.

It is a personal experience of this writer as to how much more difficult it is to believe in and defend the Christian theology, which requires a philosophical separation between religion and science, than to

attempt the same with the Bahá'í Faith, which has as one of its principles the harmony of science and religion. That was why Teilhard de Chardin had so many difficulties with the church, yet was having such a great impact on religious thought, because he tried to avoid this separation and used his scientific expertise to write his book *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959).³¹ In it he attempts to explain that the Christian message, if understood progressively, is not in contradiction with the modern idea of evolution, but can be translated into these new conceptualizations of progression and unification. Teilhard was and is often misunderstood and misused, nevertheless his influence is still remarkable.³²

Neurocardiology

The common medical understanding of the heart as a mechanical pump was in drastic contradiction to the historical understanding of the heart as the center and locus of personal self. Writing about the *Education of the Heart*, Thomas Taaffe³³ stated that this old and traditional understanding is based on the heart in a metaphorical sense only, implying that there is no reality to the metaphor of the heart as expressing the inmost self and our true identity. Science has recently discovered that the old understanding of the heart as the center of emotions and health is more realistic and can be researched scientifically.

The new science of neurocardiology³⁴ attributes to the heart the ability to have memory, to learn, to make decisions and communicate with the brain, yet there is no consciousness in these functions of the

heart. According to McCraty et al.:

The heart is a sensory organ and an information encoding and processing center with an extensive intrinsic nervous system, enabling it to learn, remember and make functional decision independent of the cranial brain.³⁵

While these neurological pathways do not directly explain the above mentioned structure of the process, they might give us an indication that this spiritual process has its physiological correspondence in the human heart, nervous system, and brain. It has also been established that the heart is the first to perceive input from the perception through the senses. As a matter of fact, it could be proven experimentally that changes in sensual input are detected by the heart seconds before the random computer program is started that will select the presentation to the senses.

Of greatest significance here is our major finding, namely, the electrophysiological evidence that the heart is directly involved in the processing of information about a future emotional stimulus seconds before the body actually experiences the stimulus. ... The heart appears to play a direct role in the perception of future events.³⁶

This fact of intuition of future events can only be explained scientifically if we consider the physical reality as seen in quantum mechanics. This will be explained below in the section dealing with physics and quantum mechanics. The heart, which is a key concept in the Bahá'í Writings, and its physical and spiritual capabilities, is a topic that certainly needs

further research. Here a short anticipatory comment must suffice.

What is most important in the context of this paper is the fact that the heart is a sophisticated information processing center.

An understanding of the complex anatomy and function of the heart's nervous system contributes an additional dimension to the newly emerging view of the heart as a sophisticated information processing center, functioning not only in concert with the brain but also independent of it. Further exploration of the part, that neurocardiological interactions play in sustaining healthy functioning may permit a more comprehensive understanding of the heart's multidimensional role in facilitating successful adaptation to the challenges of daily living.³⁷

Furthermore, it must be emphasized that, according to these new findings about the heart, the influence the heart has into the physiological, ethical and social well being of man needs to be further investigated and compared with the Bahá'í statements about the theological importance of the heart.

During states of psycho-physiological coherence, bodily systems function with a high degree of synchronization, efficiency, and harmony and the body's natural regenerative processes appear to be facilitated. Psychologically, this mode is associated with improved cognitive performance, increased emotional stability, and enhanced psychosocial function and the quality of life. Additionally,

many people report experiencing a notable reduction in inner mental dialogue along with feelings of increased peace, self-security, and sustained positive emotions after practicing maintaining this mode even for short periods such as a few days or weeks.³⁸

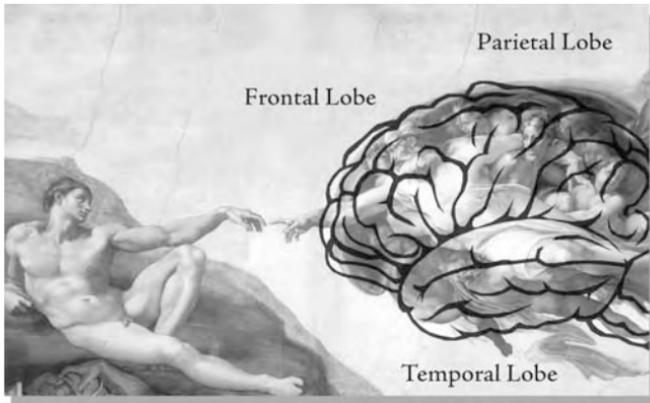
To appreciate the following Hidden Word of Bahá'u'lláh about the heart becomes much more reasonable when it is placed in the context of the new scientific findings about the sensory capacity and ability of the heart to “learn, remember and make functional decision,” so that we can talk about the knowledge and wisdom of the heart from a scientific point of view.

O SON OF MY HANDMAID! Quaff from the tongue of the merciful the stream of divine mystery, and behold from the dayspring of divine utterance the unveiled splendor of the daystar of wisdom. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of the heart, and water them with the waters of certitude, that the hyacinths of knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green from the holy city of the heart. (HW Persian 78)

Neuroscience

Besides the unifying power of the heart, which has been described above, some ideas about the human mind or intellect will be added here.

The picture of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel is taken from a book with the title *The Humanizing Brain, Where Religion and Neuroscience Meet*.³⁹ It is here reproduced in order to show how in the artist's imagination of a truth can be expressed that will take centuries to be fully understood.



As can be clearly seen above, the cloud around God the Creator has the shape of the human brain. Michelangelo was familiar with this shape and most likely selected it to show that man was created in the image of God, and the brain (or the mind, the human consciousness) is the most obvious element in man that can show this similarity in the image of God. It seems that “Michelangelo meant to portray that what God is giving to Adam is the intellect, and thus man is able to plan the best and highest and to try all things received.” The authors continue to say: “Since we are created in the image and likeness of God, we have the ability to think and imagine and decide - yes, and the ability to distort and destroy.”⁴⁰

This ability of the mind was described by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in similar words:

He has bestowed upon him the power of intellect so that through the attribute of reason, when fortified by the Holy Spirit, he may penetrate and discover ideal realities and become informed of the mysteries of the world of significances. (PUP 303)

In the above mentioned book it is stated that the human mind, as recently studied in neuroscience, presents a picture of the nature of God as perceived in traditional religion, a speculation that might go sometimes too far in speaking about God; but it indicates the way the human brain and mind is part of this world, and that consciousness is related to the material aspect of this universe. Much more about this ability of the human mind has recently been said in the interpretation of the findings of quantum mechanics and has been developed by many other writers, especially in the context of quantum mechanics and its implications.⁴¹

Unity in Quantum Mechanics

It is commonly accepted that the findings of quantum mechanics have consequences that reach into metaphysics and ontology. “It should be clear by now that one of the fundamental problems thrown up by quantum mechanics in general, and the measuring problem, in particular, is the nature of reality - what is it that ‘really exists’ in the universe?”⁴²

The different interpretations of these connections fill books; how far these applications can go was described by E. H. Walker. At a conference at “New Visions of Reality”, sponsored by the Department of

Physics of the University of Berkeley, and in the *Journal of Time, Space and Knowledge*, Evan Harris Walker stated: "What we have been doing here is laying the foundations for a religion of the twenty first century," and he reports that he was astounded "how quickly the other speakers agreed with this assessment of a meeting in which neither God nor religion had figured as the primary topic."⁴³

Most books on this topic try to insert these new ideas into Buddhist or Hindu thinking, into some New Age cosmology, or into the mystic traditions. The value and meaning of these diverse interpretations can be questioned. But these different interpretations make one thing clear, i.e., we cannot understand the new findings of quantum mechanics unless we place them in a philosophical and/or theological conceptual frame.

When writers attempt to conceptualize the new findings of Quantum Mechanics using old religious or philosophical conceptualizations, they frequently make the logical failure Ken Wilber calls the Pre/Trans Fallacy.⁴⁴ In short, they think that an early developmental state can be compared to a more recent and more differentiated one, because often the undifferentiated magic, mythic or pre-rational notion looks for the superficial observer similar to a later differentiated and higher developed concept.

It is therefore easy to understand that Hindu, Buddhist, Biblical and other early conceptualization are used to explain the findings of Quantum Mechanics. The words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the *new age* and all the *new discoveries in science* indicate that the old ways, the old concepts, are gone and forgotten (SWAB 253). This is the truth of all

Revelations and it is clearly stated in the Bible (Mark 2:22) in the form of the parable of the wineskins, translated as bottles in the King James translation.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

Therefore, only those interpretations, which can be understood within the Vision of Bahá'u'lláh were used by this writer. And that is deliberate and required by the concept of progressive theology.

In introducing this topic it must be noted that nothing fits the following description of 'Abdu'l-Bahá better than the findings of quantum mechanics:

All the sciences and arts we now enjoy and utilize were once mysteries, and according to the mandates of nature should have remained hidden and latent, but the human intellect has broken through the laws surrounding them and discovered the underlying realities. The mind of man has taken these mysteries out of the plane of invisibility and brought them into the plane of the known and visible. (PUP 351)

The science of quantum mechanics certainly is a breakthrough and a discovery of underlying realities, taken by the “*mind of man [from] the plane of invisibility ... into the plane of the known and visible*” through the science of the smallest particles of matter. Events observed in experiments at the microscopic level of subatomic particles are experimentally transferred to macroscopic effects through the instruments of observation, which transfer the effect of these microscopic events to the

scientific macroscopic apparatus, such as a Geiger counter. In this way *“the mind of man has taken these mysteries out of the plane of invisibility and brought them into the plane of the known and visible.”*

It needs to be considered that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said these words about the scientific discoveries of His days, such as electricity, x-rays, radio and other new inventions of the time; nevertheless, these words fit equally well to the newest and most innovative findings of modern science.

Quantum mechanics is introduced here for two reasons. One is the change quantum mechanics has made to the cosmology and the presuppositions of the mechanistic milieu of modern science – away from a materialistic and reductionistic viewpoint toward an understanding, which is more open to spiritual issues. The other is that some of these findings and of their philosophical interpretations are in surprising harmony with the philosophical and theological implications of the Bahá’í Writings, as will be shown below.

This later point will be portrayed here with the understanding that the surprising development of quantum mechanics out of the physics of the smallest particles has not happened just “naturally” but rather follows this statement of Bahá’u’lláh:

All the wondrous achievements ye now witness are the direct consequences of the Revelation of this Name. In the days to come, ye will, verily, behold things of which ye have never heard before. (GWB 141)

Of all the achievements of science and technology,

especially in the area of the natural sciences and physics, the findings of quantum mechanics, developed during the last century, and their interpretations can certainly best be described “*as wondrous achievement, ... of which ye have never heard before.*” Two things must be noted about this statement. Bahá’u’lláh predicts these wondrous achievements in general, and He claims that they are a direct consequence of His revelation of the name “*the Fashioner*” as one of the names of God presented in His Writings.

Additionally, quantum mechanics is not only such an achievement, it further stimulates explanations, at least in some of its interpretations, which make it easier to understand many of the statements of Bahá’u’lláh about the renewal of the whole world through His Revelation. Even in the Christian context, it explains how to understand the words about Christ, by Whom everything was made, as stated in the prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1-3):

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

In describing quantum mechanics there are several possible approaches. While even simple textbooks mention that the findings of this science have repercussions in the fields of cosmology, of philosophy and metaphysics, there are a number of scientific and popular books, mostly written by physicists, which develop these inferences in the different fields of thinking.⁴⁵

In this paper we will take some new concepts of

quantum mechanics and develop their implication towards the Bahá'í Revelation. The different reference books are chosen as samples of how this new understanding can be presented; the last book of E. H. Walker was chosen because its findings are the most interesting for this writer and are most in harmony with the topic of this paper.

Quantum mechanics will here be presented under the topics of Enchantment through Spiritualization, Emergence of the New Creation, Entanglement in Unity, and Excellence of the Human Mind and Consciousness. These concepts and findings will be compared with ideas presented in the Bahá'í Writings.

Enchantment through Spirituality

Ervin Laszlo in his book *Science and the Reenchantment of the Cosmos, The Rise of the Integral Vision of Reality*⁴⁶ describes the changes quantum mechanics has made to the understanding of the cosmos:

The current finding of the universe's wholeness is the fruit of sustained investigation, based on observation and tested by experiment. It provides an entirely different image of the world than the mechanistic, materialistic and fragmented image we were taught in school. A cosmos that is connected, coherent, and whole recalls an ancient notion that was present in the tradition of every civilization; it is an enchanted cosmos. (p. 2)

In this book Laszlo connects the findings of quantum mechanics with the Hindu concept of the

Akashi Field and develops an Integral vision of Reality in the sense of a “first meeting-ground between science and spirituality.” (p. 93) As with many of the new books using quantum mechanics as a philosophical springboard to the area of spirituality, it is not necessary to follow all of their conclusions while evaluating their contributions.

In this case it is the connection with Hindu philosophy, which we cannot follow except in the sense of a unity of all religions. Other issues elucidated are valuable, i.e., the enchantment of the cosmos compared to the traditional and “objective” concept of classical scientific and deterministic cosmology, which can be described as worldview devoid of spirituality, value and meaning.

The meaning of the word enchantment here is obviously not “bewitchment” but “fascination.” Both meanings are used in the translation of the Bahá’í Writings, and they are clearly distinguished. Here a verse is presented from a prayer of Bahá’u’lláh, in which He compares the ordeal of the martyrs of the Faith with the Divine presence as Enchanter of the worlds in a question.

The bodies of Thy chosen ones lie quivering on distant sands: Where is the ocean of Thy presence, O Enchanter of the worlds? (BP 212)

In order to understand this comparison, one must accept the Vision of Bahá’u’lláh, which includes the following belief expressed in another prayer:

Had not every tribulation been made the bearer of Thy wisdom, and every ordeal the vehicle of Thy providence, no one would have dared oppose us, though the powers of earth and

heaven were to be leagued against us. (PM 14)

The apparent contradiction of gruesome martyrdom with an enchanting world, created by a loving God, who is called the Enchanter, can only be solved when we accept the Vision that all ordeals are signs of God's providence and wisdom. This is, according to Bahá'u'lláh, as quoted by Shoghi Effendi, the newness of the whole world and the fruit of His Revelation which He compares with the "*loftiest trees*" and its most "*enchanting blossoms,*" which are the most "*heavenly blessings.*"

'The whole earth,' writes Bahá'u'lláh, *'is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings. Immeasurably exalted is the breeze that wafteth from the garment of thy Lord, the Glorified! For lo, it hath breathed its fragrance and made all things new! Well is it with them that comprehend.'* (WOB 169)

Consequently, it could be said that quantum mechanics opens up the possibility of understanding the world as the fascinating Creation of God, which Bahá'u'lláh reveals to us in His new and *Most Sublime Vision*.

Emergence of the New Creation

The Nobel Prize laureate in physics, Robert B. Laughlin, developed the concept of emergence in his book *A different Universe, Reinventing physics from the bottom down*.⁴⁷ He considers this change as so important that he formulates it as a new age, stating

I think a good case can be made that science has now moved from an Age of Reductionism to an Age of Emergence, a time when the search for ultimate causes of things shifts from the behavior of parts to the behavior of the collective. (p. 208)

In other words, reality is defined by a view that takes the whole into consideration, and this whole is a whole that integrates its parts; it is an integrated whole, as described in the section on philosophy above. The concept of emergence as presented by Laughlin includes a different understanding of reality in which the truth or certainty of a statement is not caused by its reduction to the smallest parts but by recognizing its organization on a specific level. This principle is accepted by modern biology as well⁴⁸ and has been described psychologically and philosophically by Ken Wilber in his concept of the Holon. Holons are at the same time parts of higher Holons and at the same time have lower Holons as their parts.⁴⁹

According to Laughlin, reality is not an aggregate of elements amassed by the physical deterministic principles of cause and effects, but it is a product in a hierarchal order established by collective organizations on the different levels of reality. This is his understanding of the consequences of quantum mechanics in understanding the reality of this world.

The concept of emergence implies that the world is not organized from the bottom up, i.e., in a reductionistic and atomistic sense, but that the bottom, i.e., the atoms or smallest particles, indicate that the world is organized in a meaningful and hierarchical way, which cannot be explained in any

reductionistic manner:

It is not uncommon for a committed reductionist to dismiss the evidence of the fundamental nature of collective principles on the grounds that there actually is a deductive path from the microscopic that explains the reproducibility of these experiments. This is incorrect. (ibid. p. 19)

This emergence and collective structure of reality originates in the fact of Creation, as Bahá'u'lláh revealed:

Nothing short of His all-encompassing grace, His all-pervading mercy, could have possibly achieved it. How could it, otherwise, have been possible for sheer nothingness to have acquired by itself the worthiness and capacity to emerge from its state of non-existence into the realm of being? (GWB 64-65)

This statement can certainly be understood in the sense that all emergence of unity at any level of reality is caused by God, by His “*all-encompassing grace*” and His “*all-pervading mercy*,” i.e., by the creative power of God “*the Unifier*.” Therefore we are admonished to

... strive ye to knit together the hearts of men, in His Name, the Unifier, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. (GWB 8)

Shoghi Effendi applies this principle of unification to the social and political unity of the world. He points out that unity has been misconceived in the past as uniformity, clearly referring to the classical view of the reality as particularistic and mechanistic, where unity can only be understood as forced

uniformity, or to the fact that unity could be just a magical or utopian concept and not the reality of unity in diversity in the Bahá'í sense.

The principle of unification which it advocates and with which it stands identified they have misconceived as a shallow attempt at uniformity, its repeated assertions of the reality of supernatural agencies they have condemned as a vain belief in magic, and the glory of its idealism they have rejected as mere utopia. (WOB 73)

He further explains this unity of society and of religion as evolutionary or progressive and gradual, exemplifying it in the different forms of social unity during the history of humanity.

Just as the organic evolution of mankind has been slow and gradual, and involved successively the unification of the family, the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, so has the light vouchsafed by the Revelation of God, at various stages in the evolution of religion, and reflected in the successive Dispensations of the past, been slow and progressive. Indeed the measure of Divine Revelation, in every age, has been adapted to, and commensurate with, the degree of social progress achieved in that age by a constantly evolving humanity. (PDC 118)

The emergence of humanity and the gradual development of society and civilization in history are described by Shoghi Effendi as an internal process, requiring new virtues and moral standards, and higher capacities of humankind. He describes this newness as a process that leads humanity from the state of adolescence towards maturity.

Humanity has emerged from its former state of limitation and preliminary training. Man must now become imbued with new virtues and powers, new moral standards, new capacities. New bounties, perfect bestowals, are awaiting and already descending upon him. The gifts and blessings of the period of youth, although timely and sufficient during the adolescence of mankind, are now incapable of meeting the requirements of its maturity. (WOB 165)

Entanglement in Unity

Giancarlo Ghirardi, the chair of the Department of Theoretical Physics at the University of Trieste, described the concept of entanglement in his book, *Sneaking a Look at God's Cards, Unraveling the Mysteries of Quantum Mechanics*⁵⁰. This book gives a historical description of quantum mechanics without omitting the rather difficult conceptualizations necessary to understand its development.

In quantum mechanics, entanglement is developed from the findings that

Practically every interaction [of particles] brings with it a loss of identity of the systems that are interacting. But since in the long run everything in practice interacts with everything, what emerges is a vision of the universe as an 'unbroken whole,' an undivided unity whose parts no longer have any identity. The theory implies a fundamentally holistic vision of the universe. (p. 190)

The analysis of this process of entanglement

brings an extension of the holistic view of reality even at the macroscopic level and in practice for all the physical systems of the universe. It was not by chance that David Bohm and Basil Hitley entitled their recent book *The Undivided Universe*. (p. 191)

This process has been developed under the name of entanglement:

The original German expression used by Schrödinger, *Verschränkung*⁵¹, has become known in the scientific literature as “entanglement.” (p. 165)

Erwin Schrödinger, born near Vienna, Austria, (1887-1961) formulated the importance of this concept:

I consider [Entanglement or “*Verschränkung*”] not as one, but as the characteristic trait of Quantum Mechanics, the one that enforces its entire departure from classical lines of thought.⁵²

Ghirardi concludes:

The analysis [of entanglement] brings an extension of the holistic view of reality, even at the macroscopic level and in practice for all the physical systems of the universe.

In other words all parts of the universe are entangled, interwoven or intertwined with each other; the universe is a whole and is organized as mentioned above in emerging units on all levels of existence.

The physical unity of the universe and its emerging hierarchical order is best described in the Bahá’í Writings by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (sentences separated by

this writer):

The rational proof of this is that the atoms of the material elements are transferable from one form of existence to another, from one degree and kingdom to another, lower or higher.

For example, an atom of the soil or dust of earth may traverse the kingdoms from mineral to man by successive incorporations into the bodies of the organisms of those kingdoms.

At one time it enters into the formation of the mineral or rock; it is then absorbed by the vegetable kingdom and becomes a constituent of the body and fibre of a tree; again it is appropriated by the animal, and at a still later period is found in the body of man.

Throughout these degrees of its traversing the kingdoms from one form of phenomenal being to another, it retains its atomic existence and is never annihilated nor relegated to nonexistence. (PUP 87-88)

This description of the way of an atom from mineral to human is a clear description of the entanglement of all physical elements as well as of the emergence of organization on different levels of reality, which levels are here called kingdoms. In a letter, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá added to this description that unity is a product of attraction and love:

O honoured lady! Look about thee at the world: here unity, mutual attraction, gathering together, engenders life, but disunity and inharmony spell death.

When thou dost consider all phenomena, thou wilt see that every created thing hath come into

being through the mingling of many elements, and once this collectivity of elements is dissolved, and this harmony of components is dissevered, the life form is wiped out. (SWA 3)

Again, the created reality is considered in its structure as it emerges in the integral combination of its elements on the different levels of existence. It is important to realize that 'Abdu'l-Bahá stresses the unification of the elements through mutual attraction as the dynamical principle of this process. This mutual attraction is a consequence of God's love for the world, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The harmony of their collective structure is stressed here, and how disharmony and disunity creates death or the end of their reality.

Concluding this section it can be summarized in this statement of Bahá'u'lláh - that the unity of the world of being is the concealed power underlying creation. This sentence introduces the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh appointing 'Abdu'l-Bahá as His successor, but it could as well be understood in a wider sense as the *mighty unifying force* holding together not only the covenant but also and fundamentally the *world of being*:

O ye My Branches! A mighty force, a consummate power lieth concealed in the world of being. Fix your gaze upon it and upon its unifying influence, and not upon the differences which appear from it. (TB 221)

Excellence of the Human Mind and Consciousness

Here in this section the most daring conclusions from the findings of quantum mechanics are

presented. They have been questioned and doubted, depending on the bias of their critics, but have not been disproved. Quantum mechanics depends widely on conceptualization, and making conclusions from the findings in the subatomic level to the phenomenal world of human reality is necessary in order to understand it. How far these conclusions can go and remain still scientific and true is hard to evaluate. In this case the closeness of these conclusions to statements of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh presents an added proof, at least for those thinkers who accept this Revelation. The fact that, at least in some ways, these findings are in harmony with certain passages from the Christian Revelation as well, give them an added aspect of truth for the followers of Christianity.

Bahá'u'lláh explains the power of the human mind in the following statement:

Say: Spirit, mind, soul, and the powers of sight and hearing are but one single reality which hath manifold expressions owing to the diversity of its instruments. As thou dost observe, man's power to comprehend, move, speak, hear, and see all derive from this sign of his Lord within him. It is single in its essence, yet manifold through the diversity of its instruments.

Reflect upon this subject that thou mayest comprehend the true meaning of what hath been intended, find thyself independent of the sayings of the people, and be of them that are well assured. In like manner, when this sign of God turneth towards the brain, the head, and such means, the powers of the mind and the soul are manifested. Thy Lord, verily, is potent

to do whatsoever He pleaseth. (SLH 154)

The spirit, the mind and/or the soul are a single reality - are, as Bahá'u'lláh reveals "*single in its essence, yet manifold through the diversity of its instruments.*" In other words, the singleness of the mind cannot be studied except through the difference and the diversity of its physical instruments in the material body. Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh says "*man's power to comprehend, move, speak, hear, and see all derive from this sign of his Lord within him,*" which means that the power of the mind is exerted through the senses and the human ability to move, speak and hear. The mind is described here as the manifestation of the "*sign of his Lord within*", but it can only be seen in its effect in the material world. It is important that the mind is effective in the physical world, which usually is understood by the concept of free will, and that the mind, or the spiritual aspect of man, as it is expressed in the human mind, can therefore be studied only in its effects on the material world, when it is expressed in speech, in movement and/or when it communicates with other minds.

This will be described below in the comments on a book about the Quantum Mind by E. H Walker, *The Physics of Consciousness, the Quantum Mind and the Meaning of Life.*⁵³ Walker calls the cause of these changes the Quantum Mind, and attributes to this mind powers that have been described before only in theological writings, describing God or God's Word in its universal and fundamental power.

How did E. H. Walker do this? What follows is a concentrated and simplified summary of this book. As a physicist he said he is interested in reality, in

everything that is real. And, consciousness is a fact of reality; we all have it and know it. How can a physicist approach it? The same way any other new phenomena in physics were recognized in the past. For example, when electricity was recognized as a reality that was unknown before, physicists developed methods and approaches that connected this new reality with known things and developed a new aspect of physics.

Walker tries the same approach with consciousness. First he defines it as not material and not mechanical, later as non-local and non-time dependent, all of which we know from knowing our mind. This definition actually can be said to define spirituality, or as the Bahá'í Writings say, the Unseen, the Hidden, Inwardness, contrasting it with the Seen, the Manifest, Outwardness, or in the above quoted passage, "*sign of his Lord within.*"

Then Walker says that we all know this consciousness of humankind acts on the physical reality of this world; i.e., the human consciousness has changed the world much more than the mighty dinosaurs. Bahá'u'lláh said something very similar in the quote above, i.e., that we know of the spiritual, the mind or soul only through its "*expressions owing to the diversity of its instruments.*"

Walker studies what we know about consciousness and how it acts on physical reality. He develops, in typical scientific manner for example, the field of consciousness, describing its speed of change as $1/25$ of a second (if the pictures or the movie goes slower, we see them separate; if they are faster we blend them together, because consciousness does it that way). Then he describes the dimension of consciousness,

explaining the size of the visual field during that fraction of second and brings in a certain number of “bits of information” that are transferred through the two million nerves from the eye to the brain. He knows the speed these nerves fire, and he can, in this way, mathematically describe the field of consciousness. He brings many other numbers together that define consciousness from neurophysiologic research, and develops his view of consciousness from the point of view as it affects physical reality.

And then he asks: how does this consciousness, this non material mind, make the brain do things with the body, with matter, like move, etc., which obviously is where the rubber meets the road, where consciousness (and he appropriately includes here free will) affects physical reality.

To the contrary, the classical understanding in science was expressed in psychology by the behaviorist Skinner, who tried to solve the problem by negating mind and will, and claiming that our brain, which he calls an unknown black box, is exclusively determined by conditioning from the outside. This conditioning he then studies physically and materially, since it fits into the deterministic and materialistic cause and effect thinking of science. During my studies in psychology this understanding was in vogue, and I had a seminar on this rather strange and reductionistic approach, which was proven by Skinner in his experiments with the pigeon (and his young daughter) in the famous “Skinner box.”

Contrary to this, Walker would claim that all “scientific” denial of consciousness, of the mind or

its reduction to neurophysiologic facts, is not really required by science but only by the materialistic and reductionistic bias of science, which developed from Newton's mechanistic cosmology. He discusses several of these attempts, for example the work of the Churchlands, among others.

What is quite interesting is that Walker's conclusions about the interaction between the spiritual (consciousness) and the physical is derived from some findings of quantum mechanics, and yet it fit surprisingly well in the description of the mind by Bahá'u'lláh, Who stated that "*Spirit, mind, soul, and the powers of sight and hearing are but one single reality which hath manifold expressions owing to the diversity of its instruments.*" (SLH 154) In other words, what Bahá'u'lláh reveals about the mind, the soul or the spirit is the fact that it is a single reality, therefore not physically located or describable, but this reality is expressed in the diversity of its instruments, which are the sensual and physical characteristics of the human brain and body.

According to Walker, the human mind or consciousness can be measured and physically described by its effects on the brain's nervous synapses and consequently on the physical brain and nervous system that directs all bodily actions. According to Bahá'u'lláh, the human mind, soul or spirit finds its expression in its bodily instruments, which is saying almost the same from the other aspect of the relationship.

Seen from the world of physics we have to explain how this spiritual aspect of man, his consciousness and mind, causes change in the material world. This Walker attempts to do. Seen from a spiritual point

of view, we need to look at this question by asking how this spiritual element in man expresses itself in the physical world. Bahá'u'lláh states it expresses itself through its instruments, i.e. through the bodily senses and movements.

The astounding fact in this comparison is the new science of quantum mechanics, which according to Walker gives an explanation of this possibility of the spiritual affecting the material in quantum events in the synapses of the nervous system in the brain. These quantum effects, which are not deterministically defined by cause and effect, can be influenced by the observer, i.e., by consciousness of the human mind.

Therefore, according to Walker, the spiritual mind can influence matter at the level of the undetermined quantum processes in the brain's synapses that are small enough to allow quantum effects to happen. Walker describes this process in detail with the physics of quantum mechanics. In the context of this description he explains a number of functions of the mind, like sleep, ability to influence matter in rare cases, and why the power of the mind is usually restricted, as common sense experience tells us. Another not yet considered question is the effect of the little brain of the heart (as described above), which does not have consciousness. Walker does not consider this, but it needs to be included in this equation, a rather new and difficult task that this writer will develop in a later paper.

In the following we will take some concluding statements by Walker and compare them with statements from the Bahá'í Writings, drawing inferences from one to the other. The reader is referred to the book of Walker to see how he came to

these conclusions, because, to describe these details here would breach the format of this paper.

When talking about the history of the big bang theory Walker states:

Consciousness may also exist somewhere without being part of either a living body or a data-processing system. (p. 256)

This indicates that consciousness is transpersonal and not confined to the human person. Interestingly enough even Aristotle had said that the mind (nous) is coming from the outside. Then Walker relates the mind to quantum mechanics when, in summarizing, he said:

We have found that in their essential nature, quantum fluctuations are the stuff of consciousness and will.

And now, here, we find that this mind stuff was the beginning point of the universe - the stuff that out of a formless void created everything that was created. (p. 334)

This is what Walker calls the Quantum Mind, which he describes as being the beginning of the universe and the underlying power of its existence. In his chapter about "A God for Tomorrow," Walker claims that

Everyone worships reality. Each person looks about him, listens a moment - listens as long as life will let him pause to listen - and then he falls down and worships whatever it is that looks like this is what it is all about. (p. 372)

As a conclusion of his research into the reality of consciousness Walker then concludes:

There must exist a supreme Consciousness out of which everything else springs. (p. 334)

Then he describes this reality (the sentence is here broken up to better compare its structure):

We discover that in the beginning, there was the Quantum Mind,

- a first cause
- itself time-independent
- and non-local
- that created space time and matter/energy.

In this quote from Walker, he seems to say something rather unexpected. He speaks about the Quantum Mind (which is capitalized by Walker), and gives Him attributes that do not fit to anybody else than the Manifestations.

First cause relates to the Big Bang theory, as Walker explains it, because the origin of all that came to exist is Consciousness.

This consciousness of the Quantum Mind is time-independent, another conclusion from quantum mechanics, and it is also non-local which was proven experimentally; one electron can influence its pair even if they are separated by wide distances. If one is observed as a wave or as particle, the other will be the same, and there is no possibility of physical communication in space and time between these particles or waves. This unity of all particles and of the whole cosmos is called entanglement as described above. There are other non-local relationships in quantum mechanics, and Walker describes how the brain's consciousness functions on that basis.

In the following these three attributes given to the

Quantum Mind (i.e., being time-independent, non-local, and the first cause of everything) are compared to how Bahá'u'lláh describe the Manifestations, albeit in different words but with a similar meaning, at least as I read it today.

The issue of First cause is expressed in this statement by Bahá'u'lláh:

Nay, all else besides these Manifestations, live by the operation of Their Will, and move and have their being through the outpourings of Their grace. (GWB 179)

The fact of the Manifestations being time-independent can be compared to the statement from the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* about the Manifestations:

Even as in the 'Beginning that hath no beginnings' the term 'last' is truly applicable unto Him who is the Educator of the visible and of the invisible, in like manner, are the terms 'first' and 'last' applicable unto His Manifestations. They are at the same time the Exponents of both the 'first' and the 'last.' (KI 163)

About the issue of non-locality, that plays an important role in quantum mechanics and is an attribute of the Quantum Mind in the description of Walker. The following can be said in comparison to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh about the Manifestations:

Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence. Without feet they tread the path of the spirit, and without wings they rise unto the exalted heights of divine unity. With every fleeting breath they cover the immensity of space and at every

moment traverse the kingdoms of the visible and the invisible. (KI 66)

The Quantum Mind described by Walker above is the first cause and the creator of time and energy. This compares with the statement of Bahá'u'lláh about the Manifestations:

Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth, the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. (KI 33)

Closer and more basic to Walker's understanding of religion is probably the quote from the Gospel of John (1:1-3), repeated here in the same sense of Christ, the Word, being the creator of everything:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

We need to mention here again that there is much more to know in the future about this surprising correlation of modern physics with the Bahá'í Writings, and progress of theology in understanding the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh will give new and deeper meaning to all of these Revelations. It must be emphasized that this is what we can see today, contemplating the *wondrous achievement* of modern physics, cosmology and ontology. The harmony between science and religion is constituted by this progress of both, of science and of theology, coming closer as humanity progresses.

Conclusions

In the book of Revelation (21:5) the returning Christ is on the Throne of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is described as the New Heaven and the New Earth, and it is said about Him:

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

It is the thesis of this paper that this prophesy has been verified in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Who is regarded by Bahá'ís as the return of Christ and of all previous Manifestations or Luminaries.

Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth, the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. (KI 33)

How do we understand this? Bahá'u'lláh clearly explains what is understood with New Heaven and New Earth when He said:

On the contrary, by the term "earth" is meant the earth of understanding and knowledge, and by "heavens" the heavens of divine Revelation. Reflect thou, how, in one hand, He hath, by His mighty grasp, turned the earth of knowledge and understanding, previously unfolded, into a mere handful, and, on the other, spread out a new and highly exalted earth in the hearts of men, thus causing the freshest and loveliest blossoms, and the mightiest and loftiest trees to spring forth from the illumined bosom of man. (KI 47-48)

In this paper this earth of understanding and knowledge was followed up, especially as it is new and has changed the whole conception of this world "*in the hearts of men.*"

Concluding, it has to be kept in mind that all the ideas presented in this paper are provisional and related to the present level of understanding science, as well as, the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, with the understanding that both the processes of science and the comprehension of the Revelation are progressive. So, any conclusion presented here needs to be revised over time. The major conclusion of this paper can be summarized in the following sentence:

Metaphysics and physics of consciousness can facilitate the understanding of the Bahá'í Revelation, if compared to the sacred Writings of the Faith.

The absolute newness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and how it requires a new understanding of this world was expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Until the old ways, the old concepts, are gone and forgotten, this world of being will find no peace. (SWAB 253)

In a more prophetic and mystic pronouncement, this was stated by Bahá'u'lláh in a Hidden Word as a condition of understanding His *Most Sublime Vision ...* "*that with a clear vision, a pure heart and an attentive ear thou mayest enter the court of My holiness.*"

O SON OF DUST! Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My beauty; stop thine ears, that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My voice; empty thyself of all learning, that

thou mayest partake of My knowledge; and sanctify thyself from riches, that thou mayest obtain a lasting share from the ocean of My eternal wealth. Blind thine eyes, that is, to all save My beauty; stop thine ears to all save My word; empty thyself of all learning save the knowledge of Me; that with a clear vision, a pure heart and an attentive ear thou mayest enter the court of My holiness. (HW Persian 11)

Notes

¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 54,

In this paper the abbreviations of the Bahá'í Writings will be used as published in Bahá'í Library, www.bahai-library.com/?file=abbreviations. This list is compiled by Jonah Winters and Brett Zamir.

Pagination follows the editions in Ocean, found under bahai-education.org. Note: All quotes from *Holy Scriptures of all the Dispensations* are in italics throughout this paper.

At this point my most sincere thanks are expressed to Gwyn Magatitsch for correcting my English and for all the suggestions she made to improve the paper.

The photo presented in the title page is by Marci Abrar, BahaiPictures.com.

² *The distinguishing feature that marketh the preeminent character of this Supreme Revelation consisteth in that We have, on the one hand, blotted out from the pages of God's holy Book whatsoever hath been the cause of strife, of malice and mischief amongst the children of men, and have, on the other, laid down the essential prerequisites of concord, of understanding, of complete and enduring unity.* (GWB 97)

³ *"The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating*

influence of this most great, this new World Order.” (GWB 136)

- ⁴ It should be noted that the concept holistic is understood differently in continental Europe than in USA. While holistic is used by USA writers the same way as whole, integrating the whole and the parts, in Continental Europe, for example in German and Austrian usage, holistic is understood as giving the whole absolute preference over its parts; therefore it is seen in opposition to the concept of whole (Ganzheit), when it is seen as the integral whole.
- ⁵ Scholarship Compilation: 18 April 1989 on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly
- ⁶ Wolfgang Klebel: “Lawh-i-Hikmat, Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet of Wisdom: Towards a Progressive Bahá’í Theology”, *Lights of ‘Irfán*, Book Seven, pp. 119-162
- ⁷ Frequently in this paper paragraphs of the Writings are presented by separating their sentences in order to improve clarity of understanding.
- ⁸ This quote is presented by Giancarlo Ghirardi in his book *Sneaking a Look at God’s Cards, Unraveling the Mysteries of Quantum Mechanics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2005 (translated from the Italian *Un’occhiata alle carte di Dio*), p. 43.
- ⁹ In a personal communication to the writer, Dr. Stephen Lambden, 44 Queens Road Jesmond Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2PQ England (UK) explained this issue: “The translations of these words are interchangeable as you suggested according to context. An example would be in Some Answered Questions, *vahdaniyat* (a Persian construction derived from the same root, i.e. w-h-d) is translated as both unity and oneness. So there is no direct correlation between what is translated in English and what the original word is. So you can see from these brief examples that there are quite a number of different Arabic and Persian words used to express the oneness of God and humanity, and the unity of humankind. Translation is not 100% systematic or always correlating to a specific word.”
- ¹⁰ Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 123. This prayer starts with the significant recognition that God is unknowable in any way of knowing, praising or

describing and calling by name, when it says: “*All-praise be to Thee, O Lord, my God! I know not how to sing Thy praise, how to describe Thy glory, how to call upon Thy Name.*”

- ¹¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tabernacle of Unity*, (TU), 1.4
- ¹² John S. Hatcher, *The Ocean of His Word, A Reader's Guide to the Art of Bahá'u'lláh*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, 60091, 2002, p.81
- ¹³ Most published and unpublished papers of this writer are available electronically in the collection by Eric Fienieg, www.ericwil.nl. Under Bahá'í Studies, search under Klebel, *Pathways of Love*.
- ¹⁴ Wolfgang Klebel, “True of Thyself, The Mystical Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Ken Wiber's System of Integral Philosophy,” in *Lights of 'Irfán*, Book Six, 2005, 'Irfán Colloquia, Bahá'í National Center, 1233 Central Street, Evanston IL 60201
- ¹⁵ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tabernacle of Unity*, (TU), 5.1
- ¹⁶ Wolfgang Klebel, see endnote 14
- ¹⁷ See Ian Kluge's “Bahá'í Philosophy Page” for more detailed philosophical consideration of the Bahá'í Writings. <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Den/4944>
- ¹⁸ The issue of agnosticism and atheism was developed by this writer in a paper written in 2002, “God the Unknowable,” which is electronically available in the collection by Eric Fienieg www.ericwil.nl. Under Bahá'í Studies, search under Klebel, *God the Unknowable*.
- ¹⁹ Karen Armstrong, *A History of God, The 4000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1994, p. 125-131
- ²⁰ H. W. Loewald: “Psychoanalytic Theory and the psychoanalytic process.” in *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1970, 25, p. 65
- ²¹ Translation by this writer; the quote is taken from Augustinus Karl Wucherer-Huldenfel, *Personales Sein und Word, Einführung in den Grundgedanken Ferdinand Ebners* (Personal Being and Word, Introduction in the basic thought of Ferdinand Ebner), Herman Bölhau, Vienna, Cologne, 1985, p. 233. These ideas were developed in a paper by this author, presented at the 'Irfán Colloquium at Bosch in May 2007, published in *Lights of 'Irfán*, Book

Eight.

- ²² Karl Rahner, Herbert Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1968. Karl Rahner was my professor when I studied theology in Austria, and he was extremely careful in approaching such difficult matters, which is clear when the topic of Trinity, Trinitarian theology and Hypostatic Union in his dictionary is followed up.
- ²³ In *Lights of 'Irfán*, Bahá'í National Center, Evanston, IL, Book Seven, pp. 101-118
- ³⁸ See an unpublished paper of this writer: "Towards a Criticism of Marx's Criticism of Religion in the Bahá'í Faith" April 2001, which can be found in Eric Fienieg's (Nederland) collection of Bahá'í papers on the Web on www.ericwil.nl under "Bahá'í-eigen teksten," and "filofie" 047 (excuse the Dutch). You find many of Ian Kluge's papers there and many others.
- ²⁵ Wolfgang Klebel, "Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets of Wisdom: Towards a Progressive Bahá'í Theology", in *Lights of 'Irfán*, Book Seven, 2006, p. 134
- ²⁶ In this tabulation a draft of his forthcoming book and personal communication with him was used. The basic thoughts have already been published in Augustinus Karl Wucherer-Huldenfeld, *Ursprüngliche Erfahrung und personales Sein* (Original Experience and personal Being) Böhlau Verlag, Wien 1997, especially in the chapter on the fundamental understanding of unity and plurality as related to the Trinity concept pp. 421-445 and the section on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Ontology of Unification," pp. 395-420
- ²⁷ Ibidem, pp. 395-420. A similar point was made by Ian Kluge, in his paper: *Whitehead, De Chardin and the Bahá'í Writings* at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Den/4944>
- ²⁸ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablet to the Hague, (TH) p. 14
- ²⁹ Tabernacle of Unity (TU), 1.4
- ³⁰ See endnote 6
- ³¹ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Harper Perennial 1976: ISBN 0-06-090495-X
- ³² The closeness of Teilhard's thinking with the Bahá'í Faith and the influence of Teilhard de Chardin in today's thinking has

been described by this author in: “Unity and Progressive Revelation: Comparing Bahá’í Principles with the Basic Concepts of Teilhard de Chardin,” in *Lights of ‘Irfán*, Book Five, 2004

- ³³ Thomas Taaffe, “Education of the Heart” *Cross Currents*, Fall 95, Issue 3, p.382 states: “Remembering that the human wisdom is not simply a vision – but lived-vision – we begin to identify a source within ourselves that synthesizes feelings and vision. A wise person does not garner and dispense insights, but rather has the heart to live those insights. As the muscle which is the original source of these metaphorical applications brings life to the whole body, so the heart refers to the core-force of personality at the center of its life.”
- ³⁴ J. Andrew Armour, MD., PhD. “Neurocardiology, Anatomical and Functional Principles” 2003, University of Montreal. Published by the Institute of HeartMath, 14700 West park Ave, Boulder Creek, California 95006
- ³⁵ Rollin McCraty, Mike Atkinson and Raymond Trevor Bradley: “Electrophysiological Evidence of Intuition: Part 1. The Surprising Role of the heart” in *The Journal of Alternative and complementary Medicine*, Volume 10, Number 1, 2004, p. 140
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141
- ³⁷ J. Andrew Armour, MD., PhD., *Neurocardiology, Anatomical and Functional Principles*, University of Montreal, published by the Institute of HeartMath, 14700 West park Ave, Boulder Creek, California 95006
- ³⁸ Rollin McCray, Ph.D. and Doc Childre, *The Appreciative Heart, The Psychophysiology of Positive Emotions and Optimal Functioning*, published by the Institute of HeartMath, 14700 West Park Ave., Boulder Creek, California 95006, 2003 <http://www.heartmath.org>
- ³⁹ James B. Ashbrook and Carol Rausch Albright, *The Humanizing Brain, Where Religion and Neuroscience meet*, Pilgrim Press, Cleveland Ohio, 1997, pp.45-48. The credit for this picture is given to Frank Lynn Meshberger, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, October 1990
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46
- ⁴¹ Here only a brief selection can be provided:
Ghirardi, Giancarlo, *Sneaking a Look at God’s Cards*,

Unraveling the Mysteries of Quantum Mechanics, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2005

Goswami, Amit, *The Self-Aware Universe, how consciousness creates the material world*, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, a member of Penguin Putnam Inc., New York 1995

LaChance, Albert, J., *The Architecture of the Soul, A Unitive Model of the Human Person*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California, 2006

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Laszlo, Ervin, *Science and the Reenchantment of the Cosmos, The Rise of the Integral Vision of Reality*, Inner Traditions, Rochester, Vermont, 2006

Lipton, Bruce H., *The Biology of Belief, unleashing the power of consciousness, mater and miracles*, Mountain of Love/Elite Books, Santa Rosa, CA 95404, www.BruceLipton.com, 2005

Pearce, Joseph Chilton, *The Biology of Transcendence, A Blueprint of the Human Spirit*, Park Street Press, Rochester Vermont, 2002

Walker, Evan Harris, *The Physics of Consciousness, The Quantum Mind and the Meaning of Life*, Basic Books, A Member of the Perseus Books Group, New York, 2000

⁴² Alastair, I. M. Rae, *Quantum Mechanics*, Taylor & Francis, New York, London 2002, p. 287. This book is the fourth edition of a successful textbook first published over twenty years ago.

⁴³ Evan Harris Walker, *The Physics of Consciousness, The Quantum Mind and the Meaning of Life*, Basic Books, Perseus Books Group, New York 2000, pp. 327-328

⁴⁴ Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality, The Spirit of Evolution*, Shambhala, Boston & London, 2000, ps.210-213

⁴⁵ See endnote 41

⁴⁶ See endnote 41

⁴⁷ See endnote 41

⁴⁸ See the specific books by Pearce, Lipton and LaChance endnote 41

⁴⁹ The concept of Holon by Ken Wilber has been described

and compared to the Bahá'í Writings in this author's paper: Wolfgang A. Klebel, "True of Thyself, The Mystical Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Ken Wilber's System of Integral Philosophy" in *Lights of 'Irfán*, 'Irfán Colloquia, Evanston, IL 60201, 2005, ps. 96-98

⁵⁰ Ghirardi, Giancarlo, see endnote 12

⁵¹ "Verschränkung" in German means originally the crossing of legs or arms, and then folding together and clasping of the hands; when translated into English as entanglement, the meaning is rather "interwoven" or "intertwined," and not "ensnared" or "enmeshed".

⁵² Quoted in Ghirardi's, *ibid.* p. 165

⁵³ See endnote 41

Abbreviations of the Bahá'í Writings cited in this book

BWF	<i>Bahá'í World Faith</i>
ESW	<i>Epistle to the Son of the Wolf</i>
GWB	<i>Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh</i>
KA	<i>Kitáb-i-Aqdas</i>
KI	<i>Kitáb-i-Íqán</i>
PDC	<i>Promised Day Is Come</i>
PM	<i>Prayers and Meditations</i>
PUP	<i>Promulgation of Universal Peace</i>
SCH	<i>Scholarship</i> (compilation)
SLH	<i>Summons from the Lord of Hosts</i>
SVFV	<i>Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys</i>
SWAB	<i>Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá</i>
TB	<i>Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas</i>
TH	<i>Tablet to the Hague</i>
TU	<i>Tabernacle of Unity</i>
WOB	<i>World Order of Bahá'u'lláh</i>

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